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Connecting at the Intersection

Conversing Identities on a Street Corner in Cape Town

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: 1/11/2019

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Abstract

The research proposes to unpack the process of identity negotiation among a group of Cape Bush doctors, as well as to reflect on my own negotiation. During the time spent together, these claimants of a KhoeSan identity presented a permeating Rastafari sense of belonging and reconnected with their Indigenous identity through their work with herbs. The research participants challenged hegemonic perspectives on identity, culture, health, and respectability. They carried out their practices and beliefs within an urban environment represented by the space of the street corner. A central relational ontology emerged throughout the research, emphasizing the multiple underlying connections and interdependencies that structure their worldview and deeply influencing my personal development. The negotiation of their identity was shaped by constant processes of re-appropriation, adaptation, and re-composition and contributed to bridging historical, cultural, and social gaps imposed by years of colonisation, oppression, and marginalisation. I argue in this research that understanding the production of identity through a dynamic and fluid framework of knowledge participates to foster reinterpretations of agency, power, wealth, and marginality. To contend with the plurality of crisis we face in the contemporary moment, We must learn from these alternative worldviews.

Naphtali was standing in front of me, visibly excited to tell about his weekend and how he found the precious Red Carrots.

'I was in Plettenberg Bay, my lord. I went there with my woman. You know, even when she was pregnant, she would come with me and help to find medicine. She would dig, my brother, with the baby inside her, she would dig better than anyone and pull out roots, herbs, plants, everything...' He recalled.

'Now look, we are in the mountain over there and, at some point, I feel something. You see, my feet are connected, my toes are one with the roots underneath, I can feel the energy, the power, and I know where the plants are. It's like if the soil is speaking through my feet, through my body, then, I know. So now, I tell the others "there!"' he said pointing an imaginary spot in the concrete of the road. 'So, everyone digs, my lord, and do you know what we find? A big Red Carrot, huge my King. Yo, we found a lot of medicine that day.'

Jo showed his respect, his hands symbolizing the Trinity, the Solomon seal, imitating the gesture made by Emperor Haile Selassie I, 'Respect, my King.' Then, he completed Naphtali's words.

'Now, let me explain to you, Remi. We are the Indigenous people; we are the people from the Earth. In the mountain, we can feel the ancestors, they are all around, they guide us. That's why we must know where we come from, not deny our origins and who we are but embrace it. I'm telling you, Remi, you have to connect, to feel the relations all around, to open yourself and feel what is there.'

Introduction

'I'm telling you, Remi, you have to connect, to feel the relations all around, to open yourself…' advised Jo. But why connecting? Why this emphasis on relations? Our world is in a constant situation of motion, hosting movements of goods, people, and ideas. Therefore, contacts, exchanges, and borrowings structure global as well as personal developments. We compose and re-compose our identities through multiple connections. We dynamically and fluidly negotiate who we are as individuals and as members of a group. We need to connect to exist. That must be acknowledged and promoted.

Throughout my Honours' research on the 'reactivation' of the KhoeSan identity in the Western Cape today I have observed the great variety of ways to express that specific belonging among the claimants. This Master's thesis contends with the KhoeSan identity reclamation as a tumultuous set of responses to socio-political conditions and transitions that, although is often called a resurgence, reclamation, or reactivation, has been in continuum since the founding of the colony and way before

as I argue along with the likes of Barnard (1988), Biesele (1993), Haacke (2002), Lewis-Williams (1984), or Low (2004)… I understand these reclamations and actualizations of Indigeneity in the present moment to be a necessary and prescient response to the current conditions that we face. I am genuinely captivated by the profound respect and dignity that Indigenous communities present and I was called to write particularly about the plurality of socio/political/spiritual/cultural/natural resources that they are able to wield. More specifically, I propose to concentrate on the process of identity negotiation[1] among a group of young men who identify as Bush doctor or traditional healers. They 'work herbs', healing nations on a bustling four-way intersection in the heart of urban Cape Town. Juggling with boundaries and categorisations, these claimants[2] of an Indigenous identity are also experiencing a powerful Rastafari belonging and draw from various additional heritages. They connect.

> *After Naphtali's recollection of his weekend, he, alongside Jo, Simon, and Gad, continued their daily life, working herbs, exchanging with passers-by, and sharing knowledge. Remi, who stood out through his clothing, skin tone, and eventual behaviour was standing among the four barefoot healers in their sackcloth. Remi deeply reflected on the exchange. The French student, sharing a moment of the street corner life, seemed out of the picture, his back against the wall, going with the flow as an unpaired piece. In that regard, he continually questioned his enterprise, his role, and his legitimacy to occupy the space. However, deep inside, Remi was confident, excited, and honoured to share these moments and participate in the life of the street corner. The recurring question triggering his mind concerned the idea of relational ontology and the central need to connect. Indeed, Remi struggled to connect. The more he tried, the more his interlocutors emphasized that need. Connecting was a complex and enmeshed enterprise, encompassing relations with others, with the animal and spiritual worlds, with the social and cultural realms, with histories, ancestries, roots, senses of belonging, and with an identity. Where it seemed so easy for the group of young herbalists, it was a challenge for Remi. He needed to connect.*

Thus, not limiting the insight to the relations articulated between the supposed distinct senses of belonging[3] of these local healers – the Indigenous KhoeSan one, the Rasta identity orientation, and other potential sources of knowledge that contribute to their process of identity production – I also

[1] The shaping of one's identity is always a process of negotiation, not a static and pre-established enterprise. See pp. 14 – 15.

[2] Stemming from the idea of identity negotiation, everyone becomes a claimant for his belonging, with the term 'claimant' not bounded by legal/juridical interpretations.

[3] At first sight, the Indigenous and Rasta belongings emerge as two distinctive identities. Belonging to a Rasta community does not imply to claim an Indigenous identity and, vice-versa, many Indigenous claimants do not follow Rasta teachings, practices, and beliefs. That research proposes to overcome that strict distinction and understand identity negotiation as dynamic and fluid, nourished by interdependent and complementary senses of belonging.

propose to reflect on my own identity negotiation. Therefore, in the contact zone of a street corner, how did our different senses of belonging and sources of knowledge, compose, decompose, and re-compose into our respective identity frameworks? How do our permeating psycho-spiritual and socio-political orientations shape our claims to identity/land/dignity/ancestral wisdom/resources (natural, cultural, economic, and linguistic)?

The Western framework of thought and its master logic have established the dominant capitalist and global system and contributed to plunge the World in multiple social, political, economic, environmental crises. Refining the understanding of identity negotiation can participate in coping with these crises, enhancing the assimilation and promotion of devalued alternative forms of knowledge. Potential lessons emanate from these marginalized forms of living and conceiving the world, which are nonconforming in some ways but conform in others, legitimate but not globally recognized and acknowledged. Learning from alternative frameworks can participate to foster reinterpretations of agency, power, wealth, and marginality. In a context in which the myth of racial purity and the Nation has failed most of us, and only privileged a few, the strategies presented by the group of healers to understand themselves can add a determinant perspective in the project of challenging and overcoming the contemporary global struggles that we face. I believe that we must understand, apply, carry on, and participate in the transmission of their lessons and worldviews. Personally, the ingenuity, knowledge, and profound respect encompassing communion and fortitude in the idea of divine providence that I encountered during what I called my 'fieldwork research', transformed me. I questioned my assumptions, preconceptions, and reconsidered my life through its web of relationships. I evolved and learnt from the experience.

Additionally, new possibilities of analysis emerge from that project of refining the understanding of identity negotiation, especially through the mobilization of the concepts of incompleteness, dynamism, fluidity, and mobility. My project aims at thinking through the implications of social, cultural, and religious plurality within the Bush doctors' frameworks, rethinking our interpretations regarding the concepts of identity formation and senses of belonging.

Problem Statement

> *Bradley Van Sitters, dressed in animal-skin, a Kudu horn above his head, ushers in President Ramaphosa in Khoekhoegowab language. He begins what will become ten minutes of history, as he is the first KhoeSan 'praise singer' to open the annual State of the Nation Address. The spiritual and mysterious aspect of the oration composed of sounds and clicks (unfamiliar in the halls of parliament) moves the members of the honourable audience and triggers profoundly divided opinions. While some praise the Khoe activist for his performance,*

introducing the Khoekhoegowab language to national and international scene, others criticize the veracity of the words pronounced, considering the utterances as nonsensical. One speaker of the language, Lammie !Haoseb, even went public calling the speech complete 'gibberish' (SABC 2019). Despite the furious debate it caused, the event was an important moment of history unfolding before our eyes on national television, bringing to the forefront of the nation's consciousness the problem of indigenous identity and marginality.

This historic moment called attention to several questions, all tied at the heart of this project. The landmark event highlighted the complexity of the process of identity negotiation. Indeed, some members of the audience completely discredited the 'praise singer' as a conman disgracing the 'original' Indigenous language and identity. Others undermined the uttering based on their senses of belonging and identity conceptions, which were disconnected from potential Indigenous affiliations. More relevant to my study, the episode also unveiled a tension that resides within Coloured communities about their relations with KhoeSan identity. Additionally, other South African communities who did not recognize the identity of the speaker as legit emitted critics. Overall, the moment stressed a political and economic dilemma wrapped up in contested roots, contradictory claims to the country, and was indicative of an overall upsurge of notions of racial purity. The event both affirmed and unsettled people trying to build, defend, and legitimize their identity. The reactions, sometimes derogatory, hinted at the contemporary rise of nationalism, populism, and the promotion of exclusive identities that continue to gain ground worldwide.

In his defence, Van Sitters justified the incoherence of his 'gibberish'[4] by citing the loss of his ancestors' tongue, culture, and beliefs due to the colonial enterprise, and by arguing that he and other language activists were promoting the processes of re-interpretation and re-appropriation of a language, a history, and an identity. From this perspective, it was not gibberish but rather creative licence in the face of cultural and linguistic dispossession. Although Van Sitters did not create a completely new dialect, he participated in dynamic and fluid processes of re-composition and reconnection, bridging the gaps implemented by the years of colonial oppression and marginalisation. Bradley believed his oration touched people. He felt empowered as if a force worked through him. Ultimately, the 'praise singer' mentioned his regret not being able to burn White Sage to deepen the reconnections with ancestors[5].

With this incident as a backdrop, my research was a collaboration with a group of young men who

[4] How ironic it is that this word was used to discredit Van Sitters while this was the very word used in colonial literature and lore to describe the language of the indigenes upon the first contact.
[5] During one of our exchanges via social media.

manifested dynamism, fluidity, and incompleteness in their process of identity negotiation and contributed to answering the issues raised by Bradley's oration. Incompleteness as a 'normal' way of being must be celebrated and permits to participate in the decolonial discussion (Nyamnjoh 2017). Following on from this, one of the central arguments of this paper is that by identifying themselves as Bush doctors, Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali, signify a hitherto understudied subject position in South African society that I want to emphasize. They participate daily in elaborating responses to the multiple contemporary crises that we face as a society. These healers, or herbalists, who worked herbs within the space of a street corner in front of Kora[6], constantly negotiated with various senses of belonging, composing, re-composing, and decomposing with multiple sources of knowledge, potential ancestries, and enmeshed heritages. They contributed to the discussion on Decolonization, embodying an alternative framework of thought structured through connections and challenging the dominant Western discourse that has failed us and plunged the World into a constant and ubiquitous precarity.

Therefore, considering my interactions with the herbalists and my position, in the contact zone of a street corner, how did our different senses of belonging and sources of knowledge, compose, decompose and re-compose into our respective identity frameworks? How do our permeating psycho-spiritual and socio-political orientations shape our claims to identity/land/dignity/ancestral wisdom/resources (natural, cultural, economic, and linguistic)? Furthermore, how did KhoeSan claimants navigate between the surrounding environment, their specific and personal contemporary faiths and identity orientation, and the "traditional" practices, beliefs, and values promoted? How did KhoeSan, Rasta, and other potential sources of knowledge enrich each other through the work with plants? Finally, how can the process of negotiation promote alternative worldviews and knowledge frameworks that potentially contribute to answering the contemporary global issues we face?

Analysing and proposing to unpack this set of problematics imply the reconceptualization of various concepts, binaries oppositions, and arbitrary dichotomies such as authentic/tamed; traditional/modern; inside/outside knowledge; religious/secular; urban/natural; change/continuity. Throughout the work, I propose to highlight this process of blurring/overcoming established dualities.

Overall, I propose to understand the negotiation of supposed distinct senses of belonging, how they are re-appropriated and re-adapted in order to enhance the Indigenous claim and shape a unique identity. To answer the specificity and partiality of anthropology, I articulate the research through the Cape Bush doctors' framework of knowledge, as represented by the group in front of Kora, within

[6] I have decided to not divulge the precise co-ordinates of the space to protect the anonymity of the contributors.

the specific space of the street corner[7]. Therefore, how do these Rasta practitioners[8] re-activate their Indigenous identity, especially through the healing strategies practiced in an urban setting? Throughout the project, I carefully consider my position and reflect on the important changes that I have experienced. I also propose to enlarge the lens of analysis. Therefore, what could be the impacts of their framework of knowledge and identity formation in confronting the actual global situation?

Outline

Eight chapters structure the thesis. The Literature Review, Methodology, and Ethics constitute the three initial sections.

Then I get into the substance with the chapters called At the Corner, We Are the KhoeSan, Why Am I a Rastaman, Healing Nations, introducing the Occupation, and I Man a de Bush Doctor.

I conclude with a final word of advice from Jo, followed by the research's limitations and takeaways.

I – Literature Review

The literature review precedes the fieldwork. It shapes the theoretical foundations of the work. Therefore, how did I inform the research? What are the bodies of literature that shape the initial framework of thought? Succinctly, I drew from three main literary canons: the first focuses on Indigenous religions and knowledge framework, with a particular consideration on KhoeSan communities; the second unpacks the Rastafari movement and the relation with healing practices; the last one proposes an insight into the life at the street corner.

II – Methodology

I continue by presenting my methodology. This chapter outlines the research questions and the steps I took to elucidate those questions. What were the various measures permitting to gather relevant data? The method of participant observation, by weaving relations and sharing extensive moments with the group of herbalists, constituted the core of my fieldwork. In that part, I also analyse the writing process and propose a note on self-reflexivity.

III – Ethics

Before delving into the development, I unpack the ethical considerations structuring the research. Therefore, what were the ethics involved throughout the work? I aligned my work with the San Code of Research Ethics (SASI 2017), considering the ethical concerns raised by the communities involved.

[7] In that work, I use the terms 'pavement' and 'street corner' interchangeably.

[8] I believe the term 'practitioners' touches on the permeating nature of Rastafari. As Glazier explains, Rastafari is more than a mere system of beliefs (Glazier 2006). Being Rasta is to 'participate to a way of life that is encapsulated in the body' (Ibid: 277). The terms 'followers' or 'believers' would have limited understandings.

IV – At the Corner

Then, I get into the substance with an analysis of the life 'at the corner', contextualizing the work in its physical and symbolic settings. The universe of the street corner is central in my research; therefore, what does this complex space concretely represent? What is it to work at the corner? Furthermore, how are relations and exchanges woven within this specific space? How does this environment reunite various ways of living and how is it structuring in people's lives?

V – We Are the KhoeSan

The immersion in the life of the group of Bush doctors continues through an emphasis on the Indigenous identity claim, and more specifically the KhoeSan identity. Thus, how do these local healers and herbs practitioners mobilize their Indigenous belonging? How is the KhoeSan identity experienced and claimed? What is the place of KhoeSan Indigenous knowledge in the specific framework studied? Finally, how are KhoeSan lineages, heritages, and history re-composed?

VI – Why Am I a Rastaman

The young herbalists who contributed to the work constantly negotiated with multiple identity orientations. Therefore, the fourth chapter focuses on the process of being Rasta, a structuring aspect in their claim. Why is the Rasta belonging so powerful among KhoeSan and Coloured communities? How does the spiritual affect everyday life? How is Rastafari legitimized and how does it permit to reassert the framework of knowledge displayed?

The previous sections lead us to an initial understanding of the negotiation between the different components that shape the identity claimed by the group of healers. However, not only limited to KhoeSan and Rasta lineages, the Bush doctors' belonging is composed of additional sources, heritages, and histories. Boundaries are tenuous and senses of belonging shaping the overarching identity enmeshed and intertwined. The negotiation of mingling and interdependent identity orientations experienced through the work with herbs is the point of chapters seven and eight. What does it represent to be a Cape Bush doctor? How do the herbalists reconnect with their roots through their practices and beliefs? How do the various sources of knowledge and identity orientations mingle and permit a dynamic formation and renewal of the overarching identity?

VII – Healing Nations, introducing the Occupation

Thus, chapter seven focuses on the idea of healing nations, which enhances a representation of the Bush doctors as global healers who do not establish distinction. The stall's organisation and setting up, as well as the various ways to supply the medicine, constitute the core of the part. An important segment retraces the herb trek I experienced. This chapter describes a part of the occupation.

VIII – I Man a de Bush Doctor

Chapter eight covers the concrete healing practices of the Bush doctors and their process of knowledge formation. Medicine permeates every sphere of life; healing strategies are total and understood through a holistic perspective. Connections with other frameworks of knowledge emerge, broadening the sources and origins of the Bush doctor's wisdom and enlarging understandings. Furthermore, Indigenous people, throughout communities and across continents, share similarities and connections within their framework of thought. This chapter contributes to open up the analysis.

Conclusion

I conclude by reflecting on a piece of advice from Jo. Throughout my time at the corner, the herbalists continuously impelled me to connect, starting from the very first vignette when Jo stated, '*you have to connect, to feel the relations all around, to open yourself and feel what is there.*' Although the reflexive turn of Anthropology has sometimes led researchers to navel gaze and it is often frowned upon to spend too much time thinking about the self in a research, what better directive can there have been? I had to take seriously the instructions of my participants who commanded the diagnostic authority of doctors. My interlocutors profoundly changed my worldview and life conceptions, therefore, throughout the work, I thoroughly reflect on the impact that this experience has had on me.

Retrieving from Francis Nyamnjoh's teachings, the 'practical act of eating' reveals the 'taste of the theoretical pudding'. I have shaped my work bearing in mind this idea; the theory and the experience constantly inform each other.

Objectives

This work continues my Honours' research that discusses the reclamation of the KhoeSan identity in the Western Cape. A plurality of ways for expressing the Indigenous belonging emerged through that previous project. Therefore, I decided to deepen my understanding of the subject, focusing my Master's research on one of these multiple ways to negotiate and express the Indigenous identity. Not limited to an official claim, this project was a collaboration with a group of young men identifying as Bush doctors. The entangled senses of belonging and complex webs of relations that nourish their identity are at the centre of the development.

The process of continuity has eventually allowed me to enter the research refining my centres of interest, which encompass the fields of Indigenous studies, identity formation, and traditional healing. I propose the concepts of dynamism, incompleteness, mobility, and fluidity, as a theoretical framework informing my interconnected fields of focus. I believe these concepts offer new ways of understanding that can decentre sources of learning so sorely sought after in these desperate times of

Western knowledge dominance. I aim to continue working in that direction in my future career.

The research, which I initially conceived as a mere academic work, has eventuated much more complex. The experience that the group of Bush doctors accepted to share has revealed influencing my entire development, as a researcher and as a person. The relations, exchanges, and lessons experienced and transmitted by Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali have influenced my process of identity negotiation. Deeply and dynamically, I have reconsidered my assumptions and worldviews. I hope that the research reflects on the permeating nature of the experience in my life and underlines the power of the knowledge framework shared by the group of healers. Paying them due respect through the paper is an important objective of that work.

The fieldwork, besides being an important step in one's academic career that permits to enter a specific space of research, interact with particular people, and build a unique knowledge framework, is also a life-changing experience. Therefore, one other objective of the research is to carry on the lessons learnt from the moments shared with the group. Indeed, I encountered people who bore complex knowledge, interesting ways of life, and interconnected conceptions of the world. In the work, I propose to understand, respect, and hope to participate in the transmission of the teachings dispensed by my interlocutors. I have greatly benefited from them and believe that alternative ways of life/worldviews can influence the global world, potentially bridging gaps, promoting equality between various communities, and participating in the coping with the multiple crises that we face.

Every research being co-created, the contributors and I closely collaborated. I sought to help in the shaping of a space in which they could produce and present their own histories, their personal version of truth, and their framework of knowledge. Thus, it was not my analysis nourishing the core of the paper but their points of view and teachings. The herbalists used me in many ways, from legitimizing the relevance of their practices to the clients, to enlarging the reach of their framework of thought, passing through deepening and broadening their knowledge. In the piece, I intend to underline the importance of the informal activity - working herbs at the street corner – in the preservation of an alternative, Indigenous form of knowledge. Indigenism is ‘a distinct body of knowledge that seeks to disrupt the socially constructed idea of the archetypal Aborigine’ (Kunnie & Goduka 2006: 37). In that regard, Indigenous communities who underwent processes of exclusion, segregation, and oppression seek the control of their own cultural knowledge. Therefore, for me, potentially participating in the promotion of self-identification and self-representation is a source of pride that shapes a feeling of contribution to their cause. I consider the research as a platform in which my collaborators could express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts, challenging my prejudices and pre-established conceptions. Nevertheless, through the work, I understood that my interlocutors did not

need me as much as I needed them.

Considering the growing call to decolonize higher education and research, I interrogate how my position of privilege as a white, cisgender, heterosexual male from continental Europe plays out in this context. I hope to adequately interrogate power relations and my position in the various webs of sociality in which my fieldwork has enmeshed me, although it is not possible to discern every hierarchy.

To resume, the main objectives of the research are both personal and collective. Not merely contributing to my academic evolution, my interlocutors have fundamentally participated in my personal development. I hope the work underlines these contributions and promotes the potentialities of the knowledge framework of the group of healers. I have learnt from the experience and now seek to carry on the lessons and teachings transmitted. Although we shaped a two-way exchange, I needed Simon, Gad, Jo, and Naphtali more than they needed me. Furthermore, the growing call for decoloniality that I hope to participate in is both collective and personal. Indeed, more than challenging the dominant discourse of academia, I seek to challenge my own way of thinking. It is central for the researcher to undergo a decolonial process. Introducing myself within an alternative approach to science, acknowledging and understanding a specific framework of knowledge, and deeply considering my position are various enterprises that permit a decolonisation of the mind. I have shaped and conceived this work as a platform for self-expression, re-enacting the right of my collaborators to present, explain, and underline their specific identity. Challenging the presumptuous assumption to contribute to the community, the best I can hope is that this research pays due respect to the group of young herbalists. Indeed, I came at the corner asking for help, seeking to access the Bush doctors' world. I benefited from them; the experience and multiple exchanges have altered my life. Therefore, one of the main objectives of the paper is to underline that aspect frankly and plainly.

To reach that endeavour, concepts must be unpacked and deconstructed. For example, I propose to reinsert the concept of identity in the specific framework of knowledge of the contributors. Identity does not represent a predefined and static way of being regulated by a uniform narrative but is rather dynamic and negotiated through the conceptions and self-interpretations of the persons concerned. Fluidity, dynamism, and incompleteness are pivotal in that process, challenging the master's logic that categorised and enclosed people in rigid and irremovable identities. The following part introduces the conceptual framework of the research and proposes to unpack the main concepts that inform the development.

Conceptual framework and Keywords

The problem statement of the research explores the process of identity negotiation of a group of young Rasta men in Cape Town who introduce themselves as Bush doctors. My presence being an integrative part of the research, I include myself in the set of problematics. Unpacking the questions raised[9] mobilizes several notions and keywords that participate in the conceptual framing of the work. Therefore, the group of Bush doctors, healers, or herbalists, who contributed to the research promoted an Indigenous knowledge framework that articulated a relational ontology weaving their worldviews. Through their process of identity negotiation that involved multiple senses of belonging and promoted incompleteness, fluidity, and dynamism, they constantly reasserted their profound spiritual commitment to Rastafari, their connections with nature working herbs, and their deep entanglement in KhoeSan histories and heritages.

Bush Doctors (healers, herbalists)

The term Bush doctor derives from the Afrikaans appellation for Southern African indigenous healers B*ossiedokters.* These supposed recognized indigenous healers claim a lineage with KhoeSan ancestors, both cultural and genetic. Their practices go along a demand to access land and resources. Philander, who suggests 'a neotraditional ethnomedicine', presents a combination of 'traditional health care practices with an environmental and political ethos of the Rastafari religion' (2012: 135). Therefore, Rastafari and KhoeSan senses of belonging reunite under an overarching set of practices and beliefs. Calling themselves Bush doctors, herbalists, or healers, my collaborators stressed the stigma surrounding the first appellation.

> *'Ya, Remi boy, we are straight Bush doctors... or healers. Herbalists also. Yeah, that is what we are. But look here, sometimes people speak when we say we are Bush doctors you know. They ask where the Bush is and things like that. But we are the healers of nations, my lord, we work herbs…' said Simon and Jo, two main collaborators of the research.*

Emphasizing their land rights, they explained that no authorisation was required to work herbs[10]. '*We are the Indigenous people, my lord, the rightful owners of the land. We have the knowledge. It is inside us, taught from the elders.*' Through their practices and beliefs, they articulated their conceptions of Indigenous knowledge.

[9] See pp. 5.
[10] See pp. 41 and 69.

Indigenous knowledge

As Indigenous rights movements have proliferated transnationally to make yet another stand against colonialism, Indigenous knowledge systems have emerged as some of the 21st century's most convergent epistemic challenges to the hegemony of Western thought. Kunnie and Goduka (2006: 37) with their definition of Indigenism[11] concur with this perspective. Around the globe, Indigenous conceptions and worldviews have been depreciated and delegitimized through years of colonisation and oppression. The close connections and potential bridges that emerge across Indigenous bodies of thought lead to conceive the Indigenous framework of knowledge in its singular form, as a framework that overcomes physical, social, and racial boundaries.

Closely linked to the idea of tradition, an ambiguous term that regularly encloses societies and cultures in an everlasting past, Indigenous knowledge fully liberates its potentialities through an understanding that overcomes static and frozen interpretations. Both terms imply dynamic and fluid re-actualizations and re-compositions. They are constant works in progress. In that regard, the Christian scholar of religion John Mbiti considers an "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). The dynamic and fluid conception of Indigenous knowledge and tradition is central in Indigenous perspectives of seeing the world and eventually participates in healing and decolonial processes. Indeed, Lara Medina, a professor in the Chicana/o Studies Department at California State University, underlines a potential 'returning to the earth/cosmic-centered Indigenous knowledge of our ancestors as a means of healing the wounds inflicted by patriarchal heteronormativity, racism, and capitalism. The return is not to a romanticized past, but to ancient epistemologies that value and understand fluidity and change [...].' (Medina 2014: 168).

Through the paper, I defend the nature dynamic, mobile, constantly renewed, and re-composed of the Indigenous framework of knowledge as displayed by the group of Bush doctors. The wisdom that they accepted to share participates in the consideration and promotion of the entangled webs of relationships that compose the world. Medina confirms this relational ontology by underlining the visible and hidden interdependencies and connections that structure the Nepantla spirituality[12] (Medina 2014). Similarly, the Suquamish and Duwamish[13] leader Chief Seattle, through a poem, reasserts the structuring interconnectedness:

Humankind has not woven the web of life.
We are but one thread within it.

[11] See pp. 9.
[12] Nepantla comes from the Nahuatl language and means 'in the middle of it'.
[13] Two Native American groups of people who dwelled in the North-Western Pacific coast of America.

Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.
All things are bound together.
All things connect.

In the same way, Qin Yaqing analyzes traditional Chinese cultures through interconnections. He engages with a relational ontology of interdependency that orders the world and without which persons, things, and events would not exist (Qin 2018). The concept of Relational ontology permits to frame a theoretical foundation for the structuring webs of relationships and underlying independencies promoted in the Indigenous framework of knowledge. Challenging a more Cartesian/ Newtonian worldview, which has shaped the development of modern science and the ways social scientists understand human societies, relational ontology emphasizes the importance of relations between entities over the nature of these entities (Chengxin 2018). This enmeshed worldview promotes connections and bonds rather than substance. An idea of communion raises. Relational ontology theoretically informs concepts unpacked in the research, such as 'I and I'. Therefore, relations within the environment, with others, with the spiritual and animal realms become structuring. Decentralizing the human from the center stage and participating to understand the worlds within the big picture, relational ontology overcomes the mere duality between human/non-human, asserting Donna Haraway's proposition to move beyond the non-human and overcome anthropocentric/humanistic theories (2008). Haraway, through her Manifestos (1984; 2003), develops the idea of 'becoming-with'. She not only underlines our interdependencies within the environment but also unveils connectivities that go beyond us. Overall, the author offers a basis to reconsider our place in the worlds, to cope with the master's logic, and intervene in power relations. The idea of relational ontology permeates various spheres: the social (relations between humans, with animals), the religious (relations with God, with ancestors), but also the political and economic spheres (relations with the state, between states, etc…).

Finally, through this relational perspective situations of borrowings and exchanges become pivotal, permitting to reconsider the dichotomy between inside and outside forms of knowledge. A body of knowledge is characterized by substantial plasticity, with mobile, blurred boundaries and limits. Challenging the master's logic, Indigenous knowledge is pivotal in processes of identity claim and identity formation, simultaneously nurturing and shaped by these processes. Therefore, the enterprises of knowledge and identity production are tightly interwoven, interdependent, and inform each other. In that work, I defend an idea of Identity built on relations. Refining the concept of Identity through this prism is, therefore, the next point of focus.

Identity

As previously introduced, the concept of Identity is not a frozen and static way of being and belonging. It is a dynamic concept, characterized by fluidity and incompleteness. Shaping one's identity is a constant work in progress, a continual negotiation, re-appropriation, re-composition, which is either deliberate or subjacent. The concept of identity is multi-layered, shaped by multiple senses of belonging or possible identity orientations. Through that perspective, I propose to challenge the master's logic that encloses and limits people in static and inflexible categories. The work of Chicana writers (Akcil 2013, Anzaldua 1987, Moraga 1997), which intends to understand the mestiza consciousness, reasserts my point of view. Navigating multiple worlds, in a perpetual state of straddling multiple belongings, people dwelling 'at the border' embody the possible co-existence and interdependence of different senses of belonging within one's identity, blurring contradictions and dichotomies. Amos Tutuola (1952) reflects on the dynamism and incompleteness of identity in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. In his piece, the character of the perfect gentleman has become complete by gathering limbs from others. Achieving his goal of marriage, he regains his former identity while walking the forest with the bride. Indeed, when not borrowing limbs, he is a mere skull. Therefore, through Tutuola's pen, being is fluid, constructed, never complete, and constantly reshaped. Eventually, it can be rejected, maintained, lost, and regained. Furthermore, the perception and will of the subject deeply participate in the negotiation. Indeed, composing and re-composing one's identity, while allowing the feeling of belonging to a group, is also a very personal process. Challenging the idea of a uniform and dominant narrative, identity formation is directly dependent on self-interpretation and personal convictions.

Stemming from this understanding of identity negotiation, the dichotomy between authentic and tamed appears obsolete. Indeed, contacts, relationships, and exchanges shape one's identity. Thus, the quest toward authenticity becomes relative. The same applies to binary oppositions such as traditional and modern or change and continuity. What could a traditional or modern identity represent while, generations after generations, re-adaptations, re-appropriations, and re-compositions have occurred constantly and continue to be structuring?

I conclude that interpretation of Identity with my own identity perception, underlining my positionality as a researcher and reflecting on the relations woven with the group of the Kora street corner. Growing up in the French Alps and raised in an agnostic middle-class family, I potentially embody power and unequal relations. Imbued with violence, these relations between a researcher and his contributors have emerged through the colonial enterprise and retrieve from the master's logic. Although I am aware of this particular context, one of the goals of my research is to propose alternatives, which pass, inter alia, by acknowledging my position and the reasons for orienting the

research in that direction. Although I did not experience intense struggles or extreme situations of poverty during my childhood, I have faced my own difficulties. These life-issues have eventually contributed to shaping a part of my identity. Now reflecting on my roots and lineages, I feel shaped by multiple senses of belonging. Indeed, while the holder of the French nationality, my father was born and grew up in Algeria, from Spanish and Maltese descents. On the other hand, my mother's lineage takes roots in Italy. Therefore, various questions have emerged and continue to fuel my intellectual and personal development: Why am I considered French or Haut-Savoyard? Why have I never experienced an incident in which my Frenchness has been challenged, especially after I declare I am French? Thanks to numerous travels and experiences, I am now able to link myself to Tutuola's character (1952). Indeed, my identity formation is unfinished, a constant work in progress. I continually borrow and re-compose who I am and who I dynamically become. In this regard, I can relate to my interlocutors through the multiplicity and infinite plurality of our lineages and identity orientations. Through this continual process of reflection, my interest in the process of identity formation and in the promotion of Indigenous knowledge and belonging have emerged. Indigenous identity and alternative frameworks of knowledge have always fascinated me, as a way of challenging the mainstream discourse. My rebellious spirit, disdain for prejudices and preconceptions, and thirst for knowledge and discovery reinforced my enthusiasm for alternative conceptions of the world and Indigenous orientations.

To conclude, in that research, I propose to analyse the diverse senses of belonging shaping Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali's apprehension and formation of their Indigenous identity. I also reflect on my own process of identity development. Again, these identity markers/orientations vary from one person to another. Some domains are more valued than others, however, important markers are recurrent. For example, religiosity and spirituality, in their broad sense, emerge as pivotal in my collaborators' understanding of their Indigenous identity.

Religiosity/spirituality

The term religion is a rich, complex, and greatly adaptable concept, connected with ideas of dynamism and syncretism. In that work, I seek to challenge the generally admitted conception of religion based on 'Western cultural traditions and experience' (Saler 1987: 395). Conceiving the term through the Indigenous framework of knowledge and with a holistic vision of the world, the spiritual becomes everywhere, an integrative part of everyday life. Adherents can articulate their worldviews and define their place in the various realms (human, spiritual, animal worlds) through an ordered and fluid system of meanings, values, and beliefs that permeates every sphere of life. Then, the binary opposition between religious and secular becomes tenuous. Stemming from this holistic and interconnected nature, Lara Medina conceives spirituality as:

> One's relationship with self, with others, with nature, with the universe, with the ancestors, and with the sacred source and great mystery of life and death. Spirituality is fundamentally about being in relationship; being aware of one's interdependence or connectedness to all that can be seen and all that is unseen (2014: 167).

While popular interpretations differentiate the concepts of religion and spirituality, especially through the institutionalisation of religions[14], I propose to challenge that dichotomy through my work. The inherent spontaneity and adaptability of Indigenous worldviews orient toward a fluid and liberal conception of religion, not bounded by an institutionalized imaginary. Therefore, religiosity and spirituality become interchangeable. The research considers these blurred boundaries.

Finally, the idea of syncretism represents the dynamic combination of multiple practices and beliefs, resulting in a unique religious framework, or 'religious frontiers' (Chidester 1996). Forms of syncretism are articulated in reaction to an oppressive dominant discourse and underline capacities of adaptation and resistance. Understanding syncretism in relation to power relationships and as a challenge to the structures of domination in which these re-compositions take place participate in the reconsideration of dichotomies such as authentic and tamed or traditional and modern. The plastic, fluid, and relational aspects of religion nourish David Chidester's idea of 'religious frontiers' (1996). They are zones of contact and intercultural exchanges structured by processes of borrowings, constant re-adaptations, and re-appropriations. Those aspects are particularly emergent in KhoeSan religions[15] (Barnard 1988; Chidester 1996; Guenther 1994, 1999).

Overall, all the concepts defined are characterized by incompleteness, fluidity, and mobility. It is through this prism that I propose to reach a better understanding of the identity negotiation at stake in the research. Dichotomies such as authentic/tamed; traditional/modern; inside/outside knowledge; religious/secular; urban/rural; and change/continuity must be challenged, rethought, and reconsidered. Then, the reader, as well as the searcher, can begin to embrace an alternative mode of thought, the Indigenous framework of knowledge, which promotes the idea of relational ontology alongside the concepts previously cited. Indeed, to respond to the multiple crises that we face, I propose that we reconsider the philosophies and assumptions that have taken us in the actual situation. I hope that the research participates in this process of reconsideration and reconceptualization.

[14] That duality was analysed in a course taught by UCT Professor Asonzeh Ukah.
[15] See pp. 18 – 21.

A brief note on what is shifting from the proposal

I wrote my proposal while already exchanging with the group of Bush doctors occupying the street corner of Kora. Therefore, I reconsidered some quotes and episodes from that previous work with more insight and a deeper involvement in the research. Data and information are mobile, changing, and must be re-actualized at the different stages of the work. I completed some of the early discussions with additional input from the fieldwork, reinforcing, challenging, or précising the argument.

Initially, I imagined a clear and apparent religious field. However, through the fieldwork, the religious domain emerged deeply embedded with the other spheres of life. Therefore, a specific focus on religions appeared disconnected from the concrete of the experience. However, the spiritual in its broader sense surfaced in the research. This new approach eventually permitted me to re-think the very nature of the religious field. Although I knew the theoretical openness and the holistic aspect of it, the concrete of the research added another dimension to my conception. The experience I lived asserted and deepened the theoretical framework previously broached in class. In addition, the Bush doctors' disinterest in KhoeSan Gods[16] took away an important angle of analysis of the proposal.

A shift also occurred regarding the dichotomy between cultural change and continuity. Indeed, through the exchanges and relations woven with the herbalists, the structuring duality of my proposal was overshadowed. The research being a co-creation, the contributors' framework of knowledge and worldviews must lead. Therefore, I reconsidered the place of the duality in the work, hoping to align the research with the Bush doctors' needs. Academic works must be potential platforms for the participants to express themselves; the dichotomy between cultural persistence and change did not emerge pivotal through the framework of thought displayed.

Finally, Simon, Jo, Gad, and Naphtali conceived their Indigenous identity as an open and mobile affiliation with broad connections, rather than as a strict, rigid, and bounded KhoeSan belonging. The process of identity formation is dynamic and so are the identities shaped. The contributors of that work understood and highlighted that nature. Therefore, I did not use the term *≠Gurokam Khoen* that Denver[17] proposed in the proposal, which seemed too specific, distant, and disconnected from the group of Bush doctors' conception. In that regard, several situations underlined a discrepancy between activists promoting the KhoeSan identity and the contributors of the work. The research proposes to underline the self-conception of people not attached to official and established positions in the claim.

[16] See pp. 61 – 62 and 86.
[17] See p. 33 and 59.

Nevertheless, the four healers actively acknowledged and asserted their Indigenous identity, an open, fluid, and dynamic KhoeSan identity. Although they were not established activists, they concretely participated in the discussion on the claim and legitimisation of the Indigenous belonging.

I – Literature Review

The problem statement of the research touches on the process of identity negotiation of a group of Bush doctors in Cape Town. Therefore, three main points of entry have shaped the Literature review. I have placed the initial focus on the Indigenous framework of knowledge and religions, especially in relation to the environment and healing strategies. In that section, I have particularly mobilized the KhoeSan framework of thought. However, challenging a crystallization of an imaginary 'other', I have expanded my lens of pre-analysis and encompassed a plunge into Rastafari and the relations established with healing practices, the spiritual, and the natural. Finally, I have broadened the body of literature to an analysis of the space of the street corner in which the research articulates.

1) Indigenous religions and knowledge

Religious studies consider the underlying aspect of African religions in the 'formation and organisation of social, cultural, political, and economic structures and lifestyles' (Ukah 2016: 48). Therefore, my initial focus centred on KhoeSan religions and the relations to other spheres of life. Through the literature, early KhoeSan religions are often analyzed from the Western point of view. An important part of religious studies lacks the Indigenous perspective and openness in conceptualization (Bleek & Lloyd 1911; Hahn 1881; Kolb 1731). Arbitrary projections, interpretations, and ethnocentric approaches have reduced possibilities of understanding and limited the complexity and specificity of the KhoeSan religious frameworks. The various works realized present a constant shift, from a complete denial of an Indigenous religious orientation, with people described as 'less than fully human beings' (Chidester 1996: 52), to frozen depictions of so-called religious traditions. Authors link these eventual sacred practices and beliefs with the 'worshipping [of the] sun, moon, and stars' (Bleek & Lloyd 1911: 435), ceremonies structuring the whole cosmology (Kolb 1731), and beliefs in powerful deities (Bleek & Lloyd 1911; Chidester 1996; Hahn 1881). *Tsui//Goab* or *//Gauab* are entities often presented as governing the spiritualities of precolonial KhoeSan communities (Bleek & Lloyd 1911; Hahn 1881). This situation of alternation eventually legitimized the seizure of Indigenous land rights and the establishment of colonial containment in reserves. My work aims at overcoming these obsolete and brutal considerations and at allowing for a better understanding of KhoeSan religious frameworks, through my contributors' conceptions.

The long and repressive colonial period that KhoeSan communities faced has led to important religious, cultural, and historical gaps. Stemming from this, some authors (Elphick 1977; Fauvelle 2006; Gordon 1998) present a clear rupture between actual and precolonial practices and beliefs, describing a vanished identity and culture and discussing a genocide. Others (Barnard 1988; Biesele 1993; Haacke 2002; Lewis-Williams 1984; Low 2004) emphasize an idea of continuity. Although processes of re-appropriation and re-adaptation continually occur, I believe that the long phase of transitions has been in continuum since the founding of the colony and before. The 'catch-all' Coloured identity has eventually emerged from the colonial situation, first as an arbitrary categorisation implemented by the colonizer, then as a re-appropriated identity to fill these gaps and assume a new contemporary belonging. This new belonging has eventually permitted to disconnect from past preconceptions and prejudices but has also marked a clear separation from potential Indigenous lineages. On the other hand, claimants for a KhoeSan identity seek to overcome the historical and cultural oblivion by re-connecting with their roots, ancestors, and lineages, re-appropriating forgotten histories, and re-composing their sense of belonging and identity. Nama Xam, a rapper who promotes the Indigenous identity through conscious lyrics and the use of Nama language, sings in Exercise Oefening (n.d.), 'I am living, loving, breathing, beating my drum with a magic elixir, calling my ancestors, remembering my story, walking the path I chose.' He contributes to the promotion of self-acceptance and self-empowerment both on personal and communal levels. In that regard, identity negotiation is both a personal and shared process. Overall, the opposition between the Coloured and KhoeSan identities is structuring in the claim. This conflicting and intertwined relationship cannot be overlooked in the research.

Forms of syncretism and creolization surface from colonial situations. Processes of re-appropriation and re-adaptation participate in the subsistence of marginalized communities that must cope with oppressive and repressive contexts. Elizabeth Elbourne (1992) analyses the introduction of Christian missions in the Cape at the end of the eighteenth century. She underlines the creative use of Christianity 'to reconstruct a broken world' (Elbourne 1992: 4). Missions permitted to fill the religious, cultural, and historical gaps. Negotiated relationships were established between KhoeSan communities and missionaries. In this situation, the respective religions were not exclusive to each other but woven, open to processes of borrowings and adaptations. Indigenous communities 'heard the message in accordance with their own needs and existing situations' (Ibid: 9), which echoes the experience I lived with the group of Bush doctors. Furthermore, David Chidester's notion of 'religious frontiers' (1996), as zones of contact and intercultural exchanges between outsiders and Indigenous communities, becomes particularly relevant. Barnard précises that 'in the case of the Bushmen, assimilation of new ideas is non-problematic, and religious notions have a fluid character' (Barnard 1988: 217). This

fluid character permits to understand a potential negotiation with other spiritual frameworks, sources of knowledge, and heritages. Dynamism and fluidity are key concepts of the work.

Expanding the focus to the process of identity formation, the concept of creolization refers to a 'cultural formation in contexts of colonialism' and underlines the potential adaptive of people experiencing 'violent discontinuity' and 'deportation' (Erasmus 2011: 640). Therefore, identity formation emerges as a cultural enterprise; a social construction constantly negotiated, renewed, and re-adapted. The marginalized, oppressed, and delocalized people compose and re-compose their belonging seeking their own well-being as individuals and within a community, this taking into consideration their global contemporary context. Indigenous communities can fill the voids generated by colonialism through potential adaptations, borrowings, renewals, and re-appropriations. In that regard, identity formation becomes a constant work in progress, never complete nor static. Therefore, I propose to reconsider the concepts of syncretism and creolization joining Zip's critics of 'unsatisfactory analytic concepts to unveil the actual workings of hidden structures of domination' (2006: 98 – 99). We must acknowledge and challenge those underlining structures of domination that fuelled the colonial enterprise and continue to influence the multiple contemporary crises.

The relationships maintained with nature and the environment are mutual in Indigenous worldviews. Indeed, Indigenous communities often present a 'closeness to the natural world and Creator' (Kunnie & Goduka 2006: 3). Relations with land are structuring; the access and right to land permitting to legitimize communities as Indigenous and rightful residents of a territory. Land claims emerge as central endeavours in Indigenous lives seeking respect and fair representation. Furthermore, lands provide potential access to ancestors, connections with specific cosmologies, and possibilities to carry on rituals, beliefs, and practices. Healing strategies, initiations, weather modification rites, etc., enmeshed within the environment. Rock art further exemplifies this aspect of Indigenous knowledge. Indeed, KhoeSan artists, besides underlining the interdependency and connections between the human, animal, and spiritual worlds through their paintings, adroitly integrate the elements within their work. The rock, more than a mere canvas, becomes an integrative part of the drawing. The asperities of the surface imply various meanings. Thus, a relational harmony emerges between the painter and his work, between the artist and its substrate. The inextricable relations between KhoeSan communities and their environment have been profoundly studied (Hoernle 1918; Laidler 1928; Lee 1967; Low 2008; Marshall 1962; 1969; Vedder 1923). However, I propose to understand these relations within an urban setting.

Finally, Low (2008), who considers the nature/urban entanglement, draws a detailed analysis of KhoeSan healing practices. Although he focuses on curing and trance dances, he examines the

urbanization of health strategies. The author promotes durability and dynamism in the Indigenous conception of health explaining that 'ways of thinking about health, woven into wilder Khoekhoe cosmology and ontology, may in particular be more resistant to change than has been recognized' (Ibid: 39). This further comfort my interpretation of a continuum between precolonial and actual practices. Openness and flexibility participate in the constant re-actualization and re-appropriation of precolonial healing strategies. Furthermore, KhoeSan healers, such as Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali, regularly incorporate Western and African elements into their framework of knowledge. Additionally, the author considers the idea of potency as a force or power within living and non-living entities. That potency, which surfaced in several ways throughout my experience with the healers, participates in the idea of relational ontology connecting all the elements of the worlds. Joining Low, I believe that we must reconsider healing practices and environmental connections within the dominant urban setting of today. It is, inter alia, through these features that the Rasta orientation contributes to the reconnection with the Indigenous identity. Therefore, Rastafari has emerged as a continuation of my literary approach.

2) Rasta Live

Zips' work (2006), which gathers articles from various individuals focusing on Rastafari[18], provides a compelling interweaving of scholarly perspectives as well as insiders' points of view. The Rasta movement originally emerged in the 1930s out of impoverished Maroon communities in Jamaica and as a product of interwoven individual, social, political, and historical forces. Various authors (Zips 2006; Murrell 1998) explain that Rastas, retrieving from Marcus Garvey's 'prophecy', consider Ras Tafari Makonnen, crowned emperor of Ethiopia in 1930 under the name of Haile Selassie I, the incarnation of Jah or God on Earth. Lewis (2006) describes a movement influenced by Garveyism but not a direct product of this pan-African philosophy. Nevertheless, the prominence of Garvey's teachings and his role as a prophet are emphasized in Reggae music. In that regard, competing and complementary archives can participate to enlarge the account on Rastafari. Besides scholars and insiders' texts, art forms permit a deeper understanding. Numerous artists praise the Jamaican born leader in their songs. For example, Burning Spear (1975), one of the most influential roots Reggae artists, released an album in his honour. Reggae music has been pivotal in the global spread of Rastafari and has acted as a vehicle to popularize the movement in the rest of the world (Zips 2006), hence the central place of that genre as an archive and alternative epistemological

[18] Rastas are critical of 'isms' and 'ians', suffixes linked to Babylon and the Western oppressor. Therefore, I use 'Rastafari' to consider the movement and 'Rastas' to represent the practitioners. The reggae songs, Get Up, Stand Up by the Wailers (1973) and Ism Schism by Carlen Davis (1978) underline this opposition. The expression 'ism schism' used in these songs reflects on a schism, a split or division, caused by the 'isms', the established and oppressive system: Babylon.

resource in my work. Thus, Rastafari, not confined to Jamaica or the Caribbean islands, has evolved into a worldwide phenomenon.

Hoenisch considers a movement rooted in 'creolized religions' (Hoenisch 2006: 60). Indeed, Rastafari is 'based upon a Judaeo-Christian concept', articulating the Bible 'in relationship to Black people struggle for liberation' (Mutabaruka 2006: 22 – 23). However, I carefully consider notions of 'hybridization, creolization, or syncretization,' joining Zips' apprehension of 'unsatisfactory analytic concepts to unveil the actual workings of hidden structures of domination' (Zips 2006: 98 – 99). Therefore, I dynamically reconsider those concepts and hope that the work can participate in acknowledging and challenging the underlying structures of domination that led to the development of the movement and continue their undermining work.

The notion of repatriation further emphasizes the global and mobile character of Rastafari. Originally, Rastas were children of the African diaspora inspired by Garvey's Back to Africa movement. This exodus to the Motherland is described both as physical and spiritual (Mutabaruka 2006; Zips 2006), hence its global success even among people not deported across continents. The ideas of mobility and displacement within Rastafari beliefs make the movement aligned with contemporary social theories. These ideas also inform the thesis. Through Rastas' perspectives, Ethiopia represents the healing land and spreads through the entire African continent, stressing the centrality of Africa in the Rastafari concept of healing. The Pan-African orientation of the movement eventually helped me to understand its large success in Cape Town and among African communities. Bob Marley (1979) promotes the unity among Africans and their delocalized descendants when he sings 'Africa unite/Cause we're moving right out of Babylon/And we're going to our Father's land/How good and how pleasant it would be/Before God and man/To see the unification of all Africans.'

Through several academic research and popular misconceptions, arbitrary markers have emerged to characterize Rastas. Thus, the basic tenets, in Nazma Muller's words, are 'eat not meat, smoke plenty 'erb, and try to live righteously' (Zips 2006: 265). Globally, Rastas are unfairly pictured as ganja-smoking people, wearing dreads, and singing reggae. I hope to bring a different insight through the research, overcoming these structured and established prejudices. Not only harmful to the communities depicted, these prejudices also fail to underline 'the essential openness and ever emerging character of Rasta as a philosophy developed by a continueal process of reasoning' (Ibid: xi). Stemming from 'this continueal process of reasoning', Rastafari is perceived as an everlasting quest for wisdom and righteousness inspired by Haile Selassie I's principle that 'a man who says "I have learned enough and will learn no further" should be considered as knowing nothing at all'. This perpetual process of knowledge formation/production is central in the research. It challenges the

popular misconceptions and highlights freedom of choices and interpretations in Rastafari. Furthermore, it led me to rethink my assumptions before entering the field and to bear an open-minded approach. I started the research ready to learn, appropriate, and share knowledge dynamically.

'There is a unity in Rasta that is not uniformity' (Mutabaruka 2006: 37). Multiple potential interpretations and points of view emerge among Rasta philosophies. Different objectives are defined, from rejecting the West colonial philosophy to recreate African descents' own mental images. I intend to align the theoretical framework of the research that promotes the notions of incompleteness, dynamism, and fluidity in the processes of identity and knowledge production with the adaptive and dynamic nature of Rastafari. Not pretending to cover the totality of these multiple objectives, connections, and potential interpretations within the movement, I propose to review the research around the following concepts: Rasta and rebellion/resistance, Rasta and herbs/healing, and Rasta and Indigeneity around the world.

Andwele (2006) shows that cleaning or healing the African minds of European education is pivotal for Africans and children of the diaspora. He further underlines the process of creating specific religious, social, economic, and political structures in opposition to Babylon, the Western World system. Edmonds further asserts:

> Rastas may differ among themselves concerning many of their important beliefs, but all are in accord regarding the Babylonian nature of life in the African diaspora, and all declare their psychological and cultural rejection of the values and institutions of Babylon (Murrell 1998: 23).

Babylon, a term retrieved from Christian scriptures, bears a complex symbolic. Encompassing the different spheres of life (economic, political, religious, the educational system…), the concept embodies 'the symbolic delegitimation of those Western values and institutions that historically have exercised control over the masses of the African diaspora' (Ibid: 24). Therefore, Rastafari rises as a countercultural resistant mobilization that challenges the Western dominant discourse. The musician and educator Mutabaruka (2006) conceives a black power movement with a theological core. Seeking for immediate reparation, Rastas do not project their life after death; the struggle is now, 'Toa tama !khams ge' in Khoekhoegowab. The rejection of Babylon and the master's logic settled underneath have eventually led many members of KhoeSan and Coloured communities to join Rasta philosophies (Philander 2012; Tolsi 2011). Indeed, starting with the colonial enterprise, these communities have experienced continual oppressive relationships with the Western World system (Chidester 1996; Low 2008). Stemming from this, I propose to highlight the connections emerging between Rastafari and marginalized/oppressed communities that seek decolonization. I join Zips who consider the global

movement as one of the ‘corner stones of decolonization process’ (Zips 2006: 20), permitting to re-compose histories and narratives. Opening the analysis to the Indigenous framework of knowledge at large, Lara Medina's work on Chicana/o considers spirituality and healing strategies as important components of the decolonial discussion (Medina 2014). Therefore, the various bodies of literature gathered liberate potential relations between spirituality, healing processes, and decolonization. Healing is pivotal to overcome and cure the psychological consequences of the colonial enterprise (Ibid) and is deeply related to Rastafari through the symbolic implied (Mutabaruka 2006; Zips 2006). Possible bridges between Indigenous and Rasta frameworks of thought emerge, which I consider throughout the research. Healing is not limited to the physical well-being and the treatment of disease but encompasses the social, cultural, and spiritual worlds (Ukah 2016). It merges with the decolonizing process (Medina 2014).

Bonded to a medicinal imaginary, ideas of repatriation and reparation emerge as healing strategies. Various works (Forsythe 1983; Zips 2006) underline potential connections with medicine and Rasta Bush doctors are central figures in Rasta communities. Peter Tosh praises the occupation through his *Bush Doctor* album (1978) and its title song. Through this perspective, Rastafari becomes a potential medicine for the soul of African descents who aim at healing the colonial wounds linked with processes of deportation and oppression. The resistant movement emphasizes reconnections with the Motherland, nature, as well as with erased histories, forgotten lineages, and denied ancestors. Rastafari proposes to redress the structure of cultural amnesia and to overcome the sociohistorical and cultural stupor (Zips 2006). Again, this echoes with KhoeSan claimants who fight for re-composing and re-appropriating forgotten histories. It partially explains the good reception of the message in Coloured and Indigenous communities who seek reconnections with their lost, blurred, or denied identity and culture. Therefore, bearing in mind the various interpretations of the movement, Rastafari becomes a way of life, an everyday dedication that constitutes an integrative part of one's identity.

The corpus of literature and art forms mobilized shows that Rastafari promotes unity within diversity (Marley 1979; Mutabaruka 2006). Multiple philosophies nourish the social, political, and religious movement, which has no central authority. Key concepts such as ‘I and I’ - which implies the idea of transcendence; ‘I and I’ represents the universal connection of the elements of the worlds, a connection through Jah’s energy or power - and One Love[19] highlight this inclination toward unity. Various groups exist among Rastas, each of them implementing their conceptions of the beliefs and practices to follow. However, spirituality remains omniscient, everywhere, not confined to a single

[19] I further develop these two concepts pp. 81 – 84.

divine entity. In that regard, Rastafari considers central the connections and interdependencies of the various worlds and their multiple elements. A structuring relational ontology is at the foundation of Rasta philosophies. Therefore, I propose to draw parallels between the movement and the Indigenous framework of knowledge through their promotion of enmeshed webs of relationships. Furthermore, the communion between various Indigenous communities across the world echoes the notions of One Love and 'I and I'. Finally, the diversity of KhoeSan communities, which are composed of different groups speaking different dialects and sometimes claiming different belongings but unified through a common claim, joins Rasta philosophies.

Within the South African context, Rastafari has developed among members of the Coloured community who seek reparation, reconnection with Indigenous roots, and hope to come out of the colonial amnesia. Especially after 1994, the movement has provided a new political consciousness and an alternative narrative that has challenged the contemporary forms of political, social, and economic oppression and domination. Furthermore, inherent openness and fluidity enhance the deconstruction of racial tensions and ambiguities. Blake explains that Rastafari proposes to liberate from racism, poverty, and the continual pain of being a stranger in strange lands as well as in known territory (Zips 2006). Correlating with this idea, KhoeSan and Coloured communities forced to relocate in the Cape Flats can embrace the Rasta message of Peace and Love as an alternative to their violent and difficult realities. Rastafari leads practitioners toward more appropriate life trajectories with new senses of belonging and economic opportunities emerging (Alexandre-Brutus 2017). By becoming Rasta, many members of the Coloured community can re-discover and re-establish their formerly rejected and erased Indigenous roots. They reinsert themselves within Indigenous worldviews, embracing and promoting their KhoeSan origins, heritages, and identity. Overall, the movement has grown as a process of fusion of 'indigenousness within a universally established religious identity' (Ibid). Through the body of literature mobilized, I understand Rastafari as a vehicle for the promotion and recognition of Indigenous identity, blurring boundaries between 'traditions' and imported religions, between continuity and change. Rasta practitioners within the KhoeSan community can appropriate an exterior religious system to renew and re-activate their own framework of thought. They dynamically and fluidly shape unique religious frontiers and senses of belonging. In the more specific case of the Rasta herbalists, 'Bush doctors represent an open repository of knowledge of the land and link herbal healing to coloured people uprooted by apartheid' (Philander 2012: 151). These Indigenous healers, embedded within their urban environment, are characteristic figures of Cape Town street corner life. Therefore, I have expanded my literature review to the space of the street corner.

3) The space of the street corner, a field of his own.

The street corner, or pavement, is a space loaded with preconceptions and prejudices. The popular opinion tends to present it as a shelter for low-income, lower classes black communities (Duneier 1999; Liebow 1967) where homeless, drug addicts, 'conmen', and 'fakers' (Liebow 1967) reunite. As with Rastafari, art forms can contribute to the shaping of competing and complementary archives**.** In that regard, the Rap genre extends acutely on the subject**.** Artists centre their lyrics on the street corner life and depict their harsh reality.

First, guns, hustling and hustlers, drugs, and violence are recurrent themes linked with the street corner, eventually leading to tragic histories. For example, the Houstonian rapper Scarface (1991) sings 'he used to hustle on the street corners/His mom would always beg him to quit, but he didn't wanna/As he got older, he got even worse/Til a real n**** showed him the purpose of a hearse.

The structuring violence emerges through the war lexical field regularly mobilized by rappers. The 'hood' becomes a battlefield that shelters misunderstood people and globally overlooked/obscured frameworks of knowledge. In its song called Street Wars, the group Cypress Hill (2004) presents street corner dwellers as 'often misunderstood/Some joined the military, others just joined the hood/Street corner combat, part of the dark streets.'

The space is sometimes conceived as loaded with corruption. Police and gangsters mingle, fight, and eventually kill each other. Drugs and drug addicts animate these neighbourhoods, in which the boundaries of the law are negotiated if not completely revoked. 'Corrupted by street corner, by shootin' at the police/The fiends up all night and the neighbours getting no sleep' eventually voices the group G-Unit (2002).

Finally, rebels, revolution, and violent oppositions to the system and the authority seem to govern. Alternative frameworks of knowledge predominate. The New-York legend Nas (1994) raps, 'I don't believe in none of that s***, your facts are backwards/Nas is a rebel of the street corner/Pulling a Tec out the dresser, police got me under pressure.'

In the work, I propose to link these insiders' interpretations with the shared experience of the street corner life. Therefore, was violence structuring in the street corner lives that I encountered? What were the relations with the police, the authority, and the state? Did the space promote alternative frameworks of knowledge and participate in challenging the system established?

In academic research, scholars constantly re-actualized their interpretations of the street corner according to the context, the era, and the specific population studied (Duneier 1999; Liebow 1967;

Whyte 1943). Therefore, the conclusions drawn are subjective and partial. The pavement is more complex than popular conceptions suggest.

Indeed, entire networks of 'overlapping relationships' (Liebow 1967) are established at the corner. Friendships are developed, informal jobs created, and codes and norms structuring. These overlapping relationships correlate with the idea of relational ontology that informs the research. Therefore, I propose to challenge the apprehension of a space essentially occupied by homeless, conmen, and fakers. Furthermore, Jacob develops the idea of 'public characters' (Duneier 1999: 6), people watching on the street and contributing to shaping a safer environment. Not a place of contingency and chaos, the space is governed by informal norms and codes established by street corner men and women. Therefore, the pavement is a coherent social structure that enhances social order and liberates opportunities (Ibid). This reminds the notion of shadowlands, the metaphor of a contingent and chaotic space in which opportunities and opportunists can arise. The concept of shadowlands is proposed by a group of UCT students to 'expand on the notion of being, becoming, and being-becoming that manifests across the literature of liminality, crossroads, and borderlands' (Calleja et al. 2018: 1). Jacob continues explaining that the 'street peace of cities is not kept primarily by the police' (Duneier: 157) but by these public characters, their norms and re-composed social structures. Therefore, I seek to unpack the role of the contributors of that research within the street corner of Kora. Did they embody the idea of public characters, creating a safe environment? Did they participate in the establishment of norms and codes governing the space?

Challenging preconceptions and simple interpretations of the street corner, I consider the space enriched with different stories, points of view, and shared sources of knowledge. The wide range of people populating the pavement nuances the idea of governing gangsterism and drug economy. Indeed, potential alternative life stories and trajectories are shaped and mentored within the space (Duneier 1999). In the work, I propose to underline and understand these eventual alternatives. Furthermore, this multiplicity of worldviews and the discrepancy with the mainstream Western framework of knowledge presented at the corner lead to processes of self-reflexivity and philosophical questioning. For example, Duneier raises questions around decency. In his work, some are not ashamed to sleep in the street, urinate in public, etc. (Ibid). Therefore, projecting oneself within the life at the pavement implies relativism and openness. Spending extensive time within the space, I deeply reflect on my position and propose to question the substance behind the concept of decency. Therefore, how did the way of life experienced at the street corner challenge Western conceptions and framework of knowledge?

Finally, 'public spaces are not neutral' (Ibid: 192). Differences in gender, race, and class are evident

and acknowledged. People are treated differently regarding their specific belonging. For example, women often appear as objects of desire. They are constantly solicited, invited, and sometimes harassed. With the actual rise of gender violence, understanding the relations woven within the space of the street corner is pivotal. Race and class differences are also structuring, while conceived for what they symbolically represent rather than what they are. People in the street often despised the image of the rich white oppressor but not the concrete skin colour or social milieu. In his field, Duneier felt unwelcomed and unease on several occasions. However, once the bridges were gapped between himself and the people that he sought to understand, cordial and respectful exchanges could be woven (1999). Reflecting on my position within the research and in relation to my interlocutors is central in my work. I seek to understand and unpack eventual power unbalances within the space. I aim for fair and honest relationships.

To conclude, the analysis of the street corner permits to unpack a complex space, challenge pre-established ideas and misconceptions, and raise theoretical reconsiderations. An alternative framework of knowledge surfaces from the lives that street men experience, liberating potential new perspectives and understandings. In my work, I seek to present the space from the contributors' points of view. Balancing the literature review and the experience I lived, I hope to highlight the similarities and differences in conceptualization. Again, the partial nature of street corner lives, added to their richness and great variety, create great potentialities of interpretations. Therefore, in that work, the analysis of the space is unique and specific to the contributors. After the literature review, I propose to focus on the concrete of the method. The fieldwork, writing process, and a note on self-reflexivity are the following points of interest.

II – Methodology

1) The fieldwork

Anthropology values and affirms its incompleteness and partiality, which has led me to centre the research on the negotiation between the Indigenous and Rasta senses of belonging that partly shape the overarching identity of a group of Cape Town Bush doctors. Additional heritages and sources of knowledge complement their negotiation process. Therefore, as a co-production, the group and I shared a space, our respective forms of knowledge, and moments of our lives. They claimed fluidly KhoeSan and Rasta senses of belonging while I claimed multiple affiliations and stressed my profound desired to learn from them. All of us extensively drew from additional sources of knowledge.

Being at the street corner near Kora, with Jo, Simon, Naphtali, and Gad was my daily routine for five months (November and December 2018 then February, March, and April 2019). From one up to three hours, I exchanged, learnt, and participated in the daily life of the group of herbalists. They occupied the corner of Main Road and R. Avenue, from Monday to Saturday, working and selling herbs, prescribing remedies, interacting with customers, and simultaneously transmitting and shaping their knowledge. Informal interviews and extensive discussions constituted the process of data collection[20]. The spontaneity of the conversations and the fluidity of the information shared tended to comfort that method.

Jeanne Favret-Saada (1977) stresses the importance of participant observation in her study of witchcraft in the French Bocage. Although her total involvement led her to be the victim of curses and spells, this type of commitment and trust in alternative knowledge permits to reach deep analyses and understanding. Therefore, I partly inspired my method from her work, with an intense process of participant observation at the foundation. In that regard, I experienced the remedies prescribed by the healers, especially energy and detox mixes. I also drank different decoctions brought or concocted on the spot, for various benefits. Furthermore, I tested the properties of several medicines whom potencies were unleashed through burning and fumigation. I eventually smoked the ritual chalice[21]. I understand that smoking herbs at the street corner might trigger ethical concerns, however, I was also inspired by Geertz (1973) who shaped strong relationships in his study of the Balinese culture by witnessing illegal cockfights. Running away from the police alongside the villagers eventually strengthened his bonds with the local population. Of course, I do not imply that solid relationships are shaped by crossing the law but sharing and embracing the Bush doctors' ways of life and framework of knowledge structured the research. Sometimes, smoking the chalice could enhance harmony and conviviality in relationships. Furthermore, the ritual use of marijuana[22] to get closer to God allowed for potential negotiations with the law. It also challenged the common recreational understanding of the plant that limits the potentialities of analysis. Additionally, I followed the evolution and changes on my own body, keeping a journal to document the adjustment I went through physically, mentally, and spiritually. Finally, I could watch over the healers' stalls during their absence. Nevertheless, I did not realize any transaction, out of respect for their knowledge. Although I spent an important amount of time with the herbalists, I could not pretend to know the herbs and their properties enough to carry on sale or prescribe remedies. Moreover, my positionality, as a white

[20] I did not use a recording device or lead formal interviews with prepared questionnaires. I believe these methods would have influenced the relations woven with the contributors of the work, oriented their answers, and the overall direction of the research. I sought harmonious and spontaneous relations.

[21] The chalice is a smoking pipe that the group of Bush doctors stuffed with marijuana. My interlocutors also called it 'cup'.

[22] See pp. 42, 53, and 88 – 89.

foreigner, would have probably raised suspicion among the eventual customers and potentially undermined my contributors' legitimacy as healers.

Joining Gad, Jo, and Rambo for a hike/herb trek, was a key moment of the participant observation. Leaving the street corner in the late morning, we went on the slope of Table Mountain, mainly to connect with nature. I was able to study medicine following Jo and Gad's teachings. We spent three to four hours hiking, watching, and connecting with our surroundings. The experience eventually took an interesting turn as it emerged as a Rastafari celebration. We visited a 'sacred place' and hanged out few hours near a waterfall to experience the Sabbath with other Rastas. The shared moment eventually inserted me in a unique position, permitting me to reinforce environmental and spiritual connections and strengthening the mutual relations shared with the Bush doctors and the persons present that day. It was pivotal to further my involvement and comprehension in their specific process of knowledge production and identity formation. Additionally, I learnt and grew from this experience. On a personal level, the moment was determining.

Attending the 2018 All-Nama festival in Keetmanshoop, Namibia, visiting museums (Origins Centre at Wits University, Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town, etc…), and personal travels (Namibia, West Coast, Richtersveld, Cederberg, Drakensberg, etc…) have also contributed to the shaping of the research. I did not draw direct data from these experiences, not being within the framework of the research (both in time and in space), but these initiatives reinforced my knowledge background on the matter and contributed to opening my angles of analysis.

Now, helping the reader to project within the field, I propose to introduce the four main contributors of the research: The Indigenous healers. Throughout the development of the thesis, I unveil more details on each Bush doctor's life.

Simon was 27 when we met. Born in Saldanha Bay on the West Coast, he lived in Delft at the time of the field experience. He set his stall at the corner '*long time ago, back in 2013*'. Simon did his time as a Sackman, as they often identify each other, but did not wear the Sack anymore for the major part of the field. He used to wear sports clothing and 'tekkies'. In that regard, he challenged preconceptions surrounding the representation of the Bush doctor, often imagined dressed in a homemade outfit, living in nature, and rejecting every element attached to the mainstream society. Simon eventually wore the Sack again near the end of the fieldwork; a personal choice motivated by a family loss and a will to repent. Fluidity in life decisions, dynamism, and incompleteness rise from that continual possibility to wear the Sack. The process of identity formation is a constant work in

progress. Throughout the fieldwork, Simon's pivotal place in the organisation of the street corner clearly emerged.

> *'I'm the King of the street corner here, my lord. People must bow when I'm talking. This is my spot; I decide who is in and who is out!' he claimed half-joking during one of our conversations. Indeed, he seemed to be the one in charge of who could set his stall next to his table. 'The guy before me, he went crazy. He was burning any type of herbs, but you can't burn all these plants without knowing what you're doing. It messes you up. I told him, but you see, that guy, he didn't listen. He wanted to be the guy who takes no advice from no one. He went crazy. Then I told Jo to come, and he came. He set his things here, with me. I told other Rastas this is my spot; you get the f*** out or I will chase you. So now they know it's my corner, no one takes my spot. If Jo can't come, I tell Gad to stay here. And it's the same for him down there, near the station. He made his spot, King of his spot. That's how we roll my N****.'*

At the time of my fieldwork, Jo, born twenty-six years ago in Mitchell's Plain, was living in Marcus Garvey, the Rasta community in Philippi. He and Simon shared a long-time friendship and were now working associates. '*I know Simon because we are Rasta, my lord. Look here, we met at the Dancehall, through other Rastas, and also through herbs. You see, my brother, the medicine creates connections.*' Younger, he dreamt about being a Bush Doctor, hence his interpretation of the work with herbs that he considered his '*blessing*'. Barefoot, Jo always represented the Rastafari movement through his clothing. Early in the fieldwork, he was not ready to wear the Sack, '*it means you have to continually repent, make no sin... No, not yet, my brother. I will, but not yet*.' Nevertheless, toward the end of the research, Jo started to dress in home-sewed natural fabric. A journey in Knysna Mountains was determining in his choice. Again, this stresses the process of identity as a continual work in progress. Furthermore, the field and the research also emerge as dynamic, incomplete, and mobile endeavours. They are constantly shifting, re-actualized, and re-contextualized. Finally, Jo was very spiritual, inclined to deeper thoughts and reflections than Simon. The latter appeared more pragmatic and materialist. Jo proudly accepted his '*destiny*' of keeping the Indigenous knowledge alive, further testifying of his profound spirituality.

> *'Sometimes, I dreamt about it. I was dreaming about plants, herbs, mountains. And I know I was there, really. Look here, my lord, it is kind of my destiny. I have to do it. My Granny was a KhoeSan, she transmitted me the knowledge. Now it's my turn to keep the tradition alive. Medicine is forever, it never gets old. My kids, my brothers, they will learn. I will teach them,*

even if now they are not interested (speaking about his brothers), I will teach them when they're ready.'

Naphtali was a few years younger than Simon and Jo. He stayed in Mitchell's Plain at the time we met. He had known Jo since kindergarten. Wearing homemade sackcloth, he explained that:

'Wearing sackcloth is every day. I only wear that, from the morning to the night; that is how it is, my lord. This one, you see,' he said while grabbing his collar, 'I did it this weekend. Everything is homemade. I am the only one in Plain walking around with that. But you see, Remi, I found myself when I started to wear the Sack and walk barefoot. I could be myself, connect with the ancestors, with Jah. I represent the Indigenous people. I work herbs and stay true to God, my lord!' he proudly claimed.

Sometimes, Naphtali came at the corner with his wife and young daughter. Very talkative and extravert, he greeted and blessed others frequently. His energy and inclination to tell dramatic stories were very pleasant. Like Jo, he appeared passionate about his activity and open to share his knowledge and opinions whenever he had the opportunity. Indebted and '*making it more difficult*' for his fellow Bush doctors, he eventually vanished from the corner. Naphtali came back toward the end of my fieldwork, re-occupying and re-appropriating the space as if he had never left.

Finally, Gad, from Hout Bay, was the oldest. I met him later during the fieldwork. Usually setting up his stall near the train station, he came more regularly after the departure of Naphtali. '*I stay down there but long time ago I was here [at the Kora street corner]. I left because of that crazy guy Simon talked about. The guy left so I told Simon to come here. Then, he told Jo,*' he explained during our first encounter. Although Gad could appear relatively quiet and reserved, he greatly participated in the shaping of my knowledge around the medicine, the herbalists' practices, and their beliefs. Sharing his wisdom and experience was an important part of his personality. Thanks to Gad, I experienced the herb trek. I was then able to study the plants, leaves, and roots encountered, as well as to connect with other Rastas.

'I go fetch any type of things. I go fetch Buchu, Sage, Khaki Bush, Rhino Bush, Red and White Onions, Dassiespiss, stones... The Tiger's Eyes, here, it protects you, fights the wicked. But I also have Amethyst, Crystal, Diamonds... That one comes from Northern Cape. Sometimes we have to go all the way there you know, my lord. Because you see, the medicine don't grow in

every place, everywhere. Sometimes you have to go fetch it far away. You want to experience? Next time you come in the morning, then we go, even around here in the Mountains. We will go.'

Overall, I witnessed important freedom and fluidity of movement among the Bush doctors, who dynamically left and re-inhabited the space of the street corner. All present on the pavement some days, they could be away on other occasions. The herbalists often knew their fellow healers' various peregrinations and eventual time of return. Additional persons eventually populated the space, contributing to its richness and diversity. Nevertheless, the solid core of Simon, Jo, Naphtali, and Gad structured this part of the street.

I used self-chosen pseudonyms in the research. Although the four Bush doctors' pseudonyms represented their everyday names inspired by Biblical characters, they all wanted to be called that way. '*Everyone on the street calls me Simon. That is how everyone knows me. Put Simon in your thing, Remi boy,*' answered Simon to my ethical concerns. The additional contributors also chose their pseudonyms whenever it was possible.

Although not concretely appearing in the thesis, Carlo, a former street herbalist, emerged as a precious help to complete the research. He granted me an extensive interview, close to his home by the Company Gardens. Before focusing on the relation between food and Indigenous knowledge, he owned an herbal shop in Long Street. Preserving the environment and Indigenous knowledge emerged central during our encounter. The information he shared with me contributed to the shaping and the confirmation of the research focus.

Denver, who I met on the way back from the 2018 All-Nama cultural festival, also contributed to précising my angles of analysis. Indeed, our discussions during the long bus trip, which eventually continued through social media, helped me to build a more solid contextual background, to narrow down my subject, and to give me more confidence in the relevance of my approach. Denver's contribution was important in the framing of my research proposal.

2) The writing process

Different inspirations have participated in the shaping of the thesis. Credo Mutwa, in *Indaba, My Children* (1964), proposes to overcome the misunderstandings, prejudices, and lack of knowledge that have shaped the global conception of the African continent. These forms of ignorance often conveyed by the Western framework of thought have led to many situations of suffering and violence.

Mutwa, therefore, warns that a profound understanding is not merely reached by 'driving round the African villages taking photographs of dancing tribesmen and women and asking a few questions' (xviii), or spending times with a community conversing in the vernacular language. However, connecting with African forms of art and literature makes it possible to understand people as human beings. Thus, questioning and challenging the dominant discourses carrying fallacies and inaccuracies emerge as important goals of the work. Furthermore, I propose to connect with various forms of art and literature. Although I am probably failing in the project of producing anything other than a Eurocentric gaze, Mutwa has made me aware of that challenge. This study, at the very least, would have educated me if nothing or no one else. Correlating with the intricate connections with art, James Clifford, through the essays gathered in *Writing Culture,* assumes 'that the poetic and the political are inseparable' (1986: 2). The compilation contributes to questioning who has the authority to separate science from art or realism from fantasy. The highly influential work further underlines the potential historicity, accuracy, and objectivity of poetry, which is not limited to 'romantic or modernist subjectivism' (ibid: 26). Throughout the exchanges with the group of Bush doctors, the poetic surfaced. They transmitted oral stories, dynamically shaped, and shared knowledge enmeshed within fictional/created narratives. Therefore, juggling between genres emerges pivotal in the shaping of the thesis. Like Wicomb (2000) building an historical fiction, Mutwa (1964) seeking for a better understanding of the Black mindset through a story-teller position, or Fabian (1996) and Tshibumba painting a history of the DRC, I seek to present potential alternatives to the classic realization of scientific research, using various forms of art and different ways of relating histories. In that regard, music, and especially reggae, represents an archive to think around the philosophies, heroes, and teachings of Rastafari and other Pan-African and Afrocentric cosmologies. Rap potentially informs street life conditions. The analysis of rock art eventually helps to draw a narrative of the Indigenous people of the Cape. Finally, poems and quotes complete the approach. Alternative forms of conceiving academic research help liberating great potentialities and new ways of understanding, hence my intention in fulfilling that project.

Proposing a co-elaboration requires the respect of the framework of knowledge of the contributors, who promoted oral stories, re-appropriated narratives, and mobilized the poetic. Furthermore, their contributions, voices, and points of view must stand. Therefore, Mitchell Duneier (1999) and his extensive use of dialogues from the field was a preponderant source of inspiration. Indeed, at the foundation of my thesis are the informal interviews, exchanges, and moments shared with the Bush doctors. In the writing process, I intend to place myself in the background, upbringing my contributors' voices and their version of histories. I seek, like Credo Mutwa (1964), to establish an interface between the oral and literal traditions; orality shares the stage with a more literal/academic

approach.

I also aim, following Fabian and Tshibumba's work (1996), to build a non-linear narrative, an unlinear history. Achille Mbembe's conception of time (2001) that does not follow the diachronic or synchronic perspectives was a key input. I conceive the concept of time through its multiplicity and simultaneities, which potentially lays the foundation for a work that blurs boundaries, overcomes dichotomies, and challenges the dominant Western way of doing science. In that regard, I did not write the thesis according to a linear time frame. Episodes overlap and cross each other.

The notion of shadowlands stems from this project of blurring boundaries and dichotomies (Calleja et al. 2018). Thus, I propose to introduce the idea, as a physical and symbolic space of supposed chaos, characterized by mobility, incompleteness, and dynamism, and from which opportunities and opportunists arise. The concept can inform the theoretical framework of the paper. Identity and frameworks of thought can be negotiated in shadowlands situations. Furthermore, I seek the use of an emerging concept, potentially appropriating and popularizing it.

Challenging a Malinowskian writing style, which presents the anthropologist as a neutral observer analysing the 'natives', I try to weave a unique way of accounting myself in the field and engage in a process of discussion. In that regard, I echo the vignettes that structure the thesis with a 'voice' from across the street commenting on my being there. I use the third person focal going deeper into the process of self-reflexivity. I hope that this enterprise enhances my inclusion within the group of Bush doctors, not as a neutral observer but as an integrative part of the research, and participates in decentralizing my position from the centre stage.

Finally, the documentary *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1985), directed by the American-Ukrainian Maya Deren, reflects the possible relations between a white researcher and an Indigenous community. As an integrative part of the field, Deren becomes fully involved with the community. She is able to access possession rituals, dances, and experiences that humble and move her. In my work, I tried to achieve that same level of connections. However, I believe this project is a lifelong pursuit, something that I will continue to strive for long after the research. Finally, Deren also directly affects the study by her presence. This leads to consider the positionality of the researcher through self-reflexivity.

I hope that the writing process, inspired by these different sources, eventually participates in inscribing my work in the decolonial discussion. Above all, I hope that the piece can contribute to decolonizing my own perceptions and imagination of doing research.

3) *Self-reflexivity and the importance of the language*

Mitchell Duneier (1999), working among African American men living and sustaining on the streets of New York, was able to bridge the gap between himself and the people that he sought to understand by 'thinking carefully about who they [were] and who [he was]' (20). This highlights the importance of self-reflexivity and of understanding the researcher's position within the research. How does the latter affect the study and influence his interlocutors?

First, as a white student coming from a French middle-class family, my position implied power relationships. With Jo, Simon, Gad, or Napthali, I did not share a similar background, social milieu, race, or framework of knowledge. My appearance contrasted with the different people working or hanging out at the corner. Indeed, most of them belonged to KhoeSan, Coloured, or Black communities. The gazes from passers-by toward me were often loaded with doubts and questions. Jo underlined this aspect, laughing while a Jammie shuttle stopped at the robot in front of the stalls:

> *'Look, what do you think people must think? "What is this guy doing here? Who is he?" Look, my brother, look at them in the bus... But it's good because you are here with us. Respect. I respect you for that.'*

These doubts were especially tangible through early encounters with customers and people hanging out with the Bush doctors. Sometimes they would greet the healers but not me, probably imagining that I was another client who would not take part in eventual conversations. In these situations, the herbalists often underlined my presence, admonishing the newcomers for not greeting me. Moreover, Jo often addressed me to facilitate my involvement in conversations. Understanding my interest in Indigenous knowledge, the Bush doctors accentuated my introductions to members of their community and claimants for the KhoeSan identity (elders, activists, chiefs, etc…). '*Him, you must listen. He can explain you everything on the KhoeSan, on our people. He is a true elder, real KhoeSan, he knows everything,*' stated Gad after the passage of an elder with who we exchanged in Khoekhoegowab and shared knowledge[23]. Gad smothered the encounter with the elder, introducing me, presenting my project, and laying the foundations for further potential relations.

My presence did not seem to distract the healers from their occupation. Indeed, whenever someone stopped by the counters, they would immediately leave our conversation to satisfy the demand of the client. Eventually, we would resume the dialogue where we left it. Sometimes, my interlocutor could assert his idea through an exchange with a customer. Indeed, while explaining that the names of the

[23] See pp. 60.

plants were not universal, Jo stopped to serve a client. After the client left, he stated:

> '*You see, my lord, that guy wanted to know the name of that plant in English. I call it Moon Flower, but I don't know the scientific name. You see, I must be honest, if I don't know it, I don't want to say I know. Us, we know the KhoeSan name, or maybe we know it in Afrikaans. Sometimes in English or Xhosa also. We don't use scientific names; we use original names, my lord. But I'm not gonna lie, if I don't know, I don't know*.'

Sometimes, the healers used my presence to underline the far-reaching nature and efficacy of the medicine. '*Look sista, that guy is from France, and he is staying here with us, learning about the medicine. It works, pure medicine, from the ancestors,*' claimed Simon seeking to attract and convince a customer. Therefore, although my presence did not distract the Bush doctors from their practices, I had an impact on their comportment and interactions with others. My presence cannot be eluded from the field experience.

On occasion, conversations with people hanging out at the corner could be challenging. First, as the incarnation of the outsider, I would not be included. The race and social class discrepancies felt by Duneier (1999) were also perceptible in my fieldwork. Although I was always welcomed, I could at times feel unease or not at my place, especially at the beginning of the research. Moreover, when eventual middle-class white individuals interacted at the corner, my presence was not a fostering force. This opposes Duneier (1999) who reflects on his impact on the field and analyses the interactions between Murdrick 'the poor black men and [an] upper-middle-class white [woman]' (189). The author states that his own presence 'helps elicit "easy talk" from the woman' (204). The racial and class connections between Duneier and the woman fostered the exchange. I did not find these types of connections in the conversations I experienced. Nevertheless, the contributors of that research and I eventually created solid bonds, through my repeated presence and our several encounters. Our relations have constantly evolved and continue to do so. Rambo, a Kora employee who hung out daily at the corner for his various breaks, was happy to see my interest in the African culture. '*Remi, my brother, you like the African culture I see'* he exclaimed while I was buying one of Gad's bracelets, made with Tiger's Eyes stones. '*That is great. We must show you around now. We should go out sometimes.*' Thus, as in every relationship, once the prejudices overcome, and especially my own prejudices, my interlocutors and I were able to weave strong bonds and connections. Gradually, my early discomfort disappeared. It progressively felt natural to hang out at the corner, once my own uneasiness surpassed. As Liebow (1967) explains, symbolic relations of kinship can be woven at the street corner. Throughout the research, I eventually became a 'brother' of my interlocutors. Nevertheless, I did not try to 'become the other (to become other) nor to make him my

image' (Glissant 1990: 193), leaving space for 'the right for opacity'. Indeed, building close bonds with someone does not imply to radically restructure an identity or to become that person.

My beginner level of Afrikaans did not simplify the dialogues. Indeed, the Bush doctors regularly exchanged in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, Jo, who seemed to enjoy our conversations and respect my interest in their framework of knowledge, often translated parts of his exchanges. Although this permitted me to grasp the general ideas of the conversations, it did not allow me to take a full part in the discussions; my involvement remained limited. However, retrieving from Glissant (1990), the language barrier could emerge as another way to allow my interlocutors 'the right for opacity'. Not speaking Afrikaans could be an initial form of respect toward their private conversations, making it easier for them not to feel my presence as a burden and allowing a space for freedom while I am hanging out with them. This situation eventually changed by earning more confidence and trust from the herbalists.

'*You see, my lord, us we speak in Afrikaans, our home language. Sometimes we don't even think about speaking English and it takes more time for us to speak in English. Afrikaans is natural. But look here now, if you can understand what we say it's a completely different thing. A whole new world opens to you. It's good that you want to learn, my lord, you must learn,*' *said Jo when I told him that I wanted to learn their language.*

Jo, who was also in a learning process working on his Xhosa, seemed very happy to teach me his mother tongue. He often encouraged me to interact in Afrikaans with passers-by and with the other herbalists or to try to understand the conversations exchanged. This teaching process eventually spread; Simon, Gad, and Rambo started to participate in my formation. They also seemed to enjoy it, surprised and laughing while I was trying to interact; '*Lekker my Bru, hou probeer*' they could say. Overall, Jo, as well as my other interlocutors, seemed open to reduce the opacity between us, allowing me deeper access to their lives. In that regard, Gad proposed me to visit Hout Bay for the Sunday market, Jo invited me to Marcus Garvey, and Simon and Napthali tried to organise a night at the Dancehall, which unfortunately never materialized.

Additionally, the Bush doctors were very interested in my limited knowledge of Khoekhoegowab. The 'language of the ancients' participated in mobilizing emotions and excitement among the healers. Gad, while reading words and sentences on my phone, could not hide his satisfaction and pleasure. Seeing their excitement eventually pushed me to rework on my Khoekhoegowab, seeking for a potential contribution to my interlocutors' knowledge formation. Overall, we shared our respective knowledge through a two-way relationship.

To conclude, my position influenced the field in different ways. I managed to overcome early feelings, giving way to more harmonious and balanced relationships. Although not approaching the research as a blank slate, my repeated presence permitted me to rethink the power relationships between a researcher and the contributors of the research and to question the differences in social class and race. New interpretations, conceptions, and relations eventually emerged. These evolutions throughout the field experience were sources of pride; I believe that being able to bridge some gaps with my interlocutors proves the partial success of my project. I felt accepted and, therefore, continue to hang out at the street corner of Kora with the group of Bush doctors and the persons occupying the space.

III – Ethics

I aligned the ethics surrounding that research with the San Code of Research Ethics created by the South African San Institute in 2017. Five categories constitute the code: Respect, Honesty, Justice and Fairness, Care, and Process. Throughout the project, I sought to take into account each category, aligning my work with the communities' principles and needs and challenging the lack of consideration from some researchers who contributed to worsening the relations between KhoeSan communities and scientists/scholars. Furthermore, not only a central stage before entering the field, ethical concerns have significance for the entire experience.

Throughout the work, I sought respect by acknowledging the initial reasons for my presence and highlighting the contributors' central role in the research. Trying to follow the path of 'respectful researchers', I engaged with the contributors before the start of the study (SASI 2017). Through the relationships woven, I looked for respecting my interlocutors, their framework of knowledge, and their worldviews. I also respected their anonymity using pseudonyms that they chose and staying elusive on the location of the research. Indeed, the contributors could be easily identified with accurate coordinates. Avoiding personal judgement, I proposed to decentralize my presence from the centre stage. That research is primarily the work of my contributors. My role was to engage a conversation, transcribe their words, interpretations, and points of view, and eventually to conceptualize the information shared and gathered.

I pursued Honesty through the shaping of open and clear exchanges. In the interactions, I privileged harmony and integrity. I regularly acknowledged the purpose of my presence, seeking transparency in the enterprise. I presented eventual evolutions, changes, and shifts in the approach to the contributors, although it did not seem to bother them. While they knew I was carrying on a project of research, they could seem distant from the concrete development of the work. Although their contribution was pivotal, sharing and transmitting fluidly their knowledge and allowing me to share

with them moments of our respective lives, they did not seem interested in a potential involvement in the realisation of academic work. Nevertheless, honesty and integrity in research pushed me to keep people informed throughout the enterprise. Overall, my interlocutors seemed happy with the work co-produced.

I hoped for Justice and Fairness through the mutual shaping and maintenance of two-way relationships. The contributors were directly involved in the study. Although I did not make any benefit besides the development of my identity, thoughts, and beliefs, I tried to give back to the group of herbalists. We shared knowledge, stories, food, drinks, and time relatively fairly. I hope that the research will contribute to my collaborators and the communities concerned as much as possible. Although I cannot pretend to a total contribution to the community and I doubt that my return can match their input in my life – without those contributors there was no possible project and they deeply participated in my personal fulfilment – I tried to align the research with my interlocutors' needs.

The caring section considers local needs. Therefore, I tried to extend the caring process to the families of those involved, asking for news, proposing my help when needed, and eventually offering presents to the new-born babies[24]. Furthermore, I seek excellence in the research, as required by the SASI, although I am not the one to decide on academic success. Throughout the moments shared at the street corner, I accepted people as they were, and continue to do so by furthering my involvement with the group and maintaining our relations that have become true friendships.

Finally, I conceive the enterprise of research as a process. This was clear throughout the work and the time spent with the group of herbalists. Following the protocol implemented by the SASI is part of the overall process.

IV – At the Corner

It is through an analysis of the street corner that I propose to start the development of the research. The particularities of the space and its large potentialities of interpretations that emerge make it an integrative part of the argumentation. The supposed urban setting in which the group of Bush doctors plied their wisdom and the relations woven within are pivotal elements in the understanding of the identity negotiation that I seek to unpack. Moreover, before diving into the complex process of identity negotiation of the herbalists, the research proposes an honest representation of the everyday life of men working and hanging out at the street corner. Connecting with Lemert explanation in the foreword to the 2003 edition of *Tally's Corner* (Liebow 1967), the

[24] At the time of the fieldwork, Naphtali had a young child and Gad's partner gave birth.

stories that I propose are, first and foremost, the account of 'a moment in the lives of some men in a certain place' (xiv). In the paper, those 'men' are the herbalists; the 'certain place' represents the street corner of Kora.

1) *The street corner, introduction of the space*

> *'Remi, my brother, here we are good. In Delft, it is a f***** up place, the ghetto, no money, no clients... People are like me over there,' Simon said waving his hand in front of his face. 'Here now, you have all type of people, and they always carry some change. It's lekka, they can buy medicine. Here, it's never quiet, always moving; people are passing by all the time.'*
> *'But do you need an authorisation to set your stall in that space?' I asked, seeing a police car stopping at the robot. The three officers inside greeted us.*
> *'I never got the authorisation. You have to fill a form for a permit, go to the City council, but I never got that permit. It's fine, everybody knows it is my spot anyway. They can't kick us out, we're healing the nation, my lord. Even healing nations. They can't stop us to help our people. They can't stop us to work the medicine.'*

Retrieving from Simon's words, the crossroads between R. Avenue and Main Road[25] emerged as a space carefully chosen by the herbalists. The group with who I spent time laid their medicine on the pavement in front of Kora and Pep. The cosmopolitan nature of the neighbourhood permitted to open economic and social possibilities. In that regard, Simon stressed the importance of a rich and diverse environment in his occupation. A wide range of potential clients contributed to enhancing economic opportunities. The busy street, in constant motion, sheltered a continual flow of different people and fostered contacts and exchanges. That contrasted with Delft, the *'f***** up place'* where Simon stayed. There, *it [was] the ghetto, no money, no clients...*' According to the herbalist, diversity was limited at home, '*People are like me over there,*' he stated.

Furthermore, different shops proposed to sell food at affordable prices, toilets were available further down R. Avenue, near the station, and the taxis dropped the Bush doctors in front of the street corner. These advantages facilitated their working conditions and contributed to the choice of the space. Although according to the website of the City of Cape Town you must apply for an Informal Trading Permit to occupy a spot, Simon implied that they did not need one by stating, '*it's fine, everybody knows it is my spot anyway.*' Jo confirmed that they did not possess the authorisation. Accordingly, law enforcement occasionally fined him for failing to present a permit. Like Duneier's street vendors (1999), my interlocutors constantly negotiated with the boundaries of the law.

[25] Again, I stayed elusive on the exact location to preserve the anonymity of the group.

'That road, my lord, is the separation between [on one side] us, the mountain, the natural way, and [on the other side] the chemicals, Babylon,' explained Jo, standing in the middle of the Main Road.

'Look here, you have the pharmacy that side,' he said pointing the building facing us. 'And down there is the police station. We have good relations with the police. Sometimes they come to buy, some are our clients. Now, let me tell you, as long as we respect them they respect us. We don't smoke right in front of them. We wait for the right time, no stress...'

Proposing me the chalice that he just stuffed with marijuana, he continued.

'Come here, behind the wall... Wait... You don't wanna rush, rather be patient, wait for the right time.'

Waiting a few minutes for a police officer to get inside the station, the Bush doctor finally gave me the green light. His hands forming the star shape - the hand sign directly linked with Emperor Haile Selassie, symbolizing the Seal of Solomon - he recited a prayer punctuated by 'Jah Rastafari. You will hear that a lot when you come to Marcus Garvey. Now you can go, my lord. Pull and pass it on.'

As Jo implied, the stalls and ways of life of the Bush doctors challenged the pharmacy and police station located on the opposite side of Main Road. '*The natural way*' defied what these institutions represented: Babylon, the oppressive system, the mainstream Western framework of knowledge. Indeed, the Bush doctors' herbal/medicinal knowledge bonded to natural practices – '*it's pure medicine,*' often stated Simon – contrasted with the pharmaceutical and chemical conventional way of healing. Therefore, the herbalists could prescribe several plants to clean the body from chemical agents absorbed. They emerged as figures of resistance, embodying 'a distinct body of knowledge' (Kunnie & Goduka 2006: 37) from the Western dominant framework and challenging pre-established norms and conceptions. The regular consumption of marijuana or *Ganja* and the informal and unrecognized character of their activity[26] contrasted with the authority that the police station represented. However, maintaining forms of respect in the relationships with the different people around permitted them to work and occupy the space in harmony, without obvious trouble. Again, the group negotiated with the law, promoting respect over the written and established rules.

Remi was on the Bush doctor's side of the road, embracing the 'natural way'. Although from the outsider's point of view he potentially reflected the Western knowledge framework, Remi

[26] Jo was fined for not possessing an official authorisation to occupy the space. The ticket categorized him 'Unemployed'. It nuances the definition of the *Bossiedokters* as 'recognized indigenous healers' (11).

aspired to alternative worldviews. Sharing these moments with the healers permitted him to follow that endeavour, challenge Babylon, and oppose the authority. He could decompose and re-compose who he was and what he knew, to reshape his identity and body of thought. Although not Rasta, Remi respected Jo's prayer, his hands joined representing the Trinity. His interlocutors directly contributed to his development. They participated in his reconnection with a spiritual framework. After smoking the chalice, Remi felt more confident, deepening the bonds and connections. Jo inviting him to Marcus Garvey reinforced that feeling. Remi started to feel as a part of a community, connecting…

'Look here, my brother, one day, a guy stole from the Pep, right here, middle of the day. So now, if you're staying here,' Jo said while going a few meters away, 'you can see everything. You see the people passing by, etc. Look, I was right here, looking that way,' he continued turning his back to the Pep. 'We heard a lot of noise, my lord, people screaming. Then, that guy, the thief, he was running in that direction, trying to cross the street. Me aya, I'm here, right here, I hear all that noise, people yelling. I just turn and - an impulse - hook the guy. Now, if someone is running as fast as he can, and he gets caught by a hook, you imagine what happens. The guy falls on his back... Bad. I remember that some schoolboys were hanging out exactly there,' he said pointing a space a few meters further up the road. 'You know what happened, Remi? They jumped on him and beat him up until the police came.'

Jo marked a pause, greeted someone, and continued.

'Now, you see, my lord, we are respected in the street. Even the police know that we catch the thieves. We see everything going on. We watch this place. The people, since that day, they respect us for that. That is also why the police let us do our thing, as long as there is respect.'

Through this episode, the relations that Jo and the other herbalists had woven with their street neighbours seemed quite strong. They appeared as 'public characters' with their 'eyes upon the street' (Duneier 1999: 6) and making the pavement – a space shared by people from various horizons (gangsters and robbers, teachers and workers, elders and youngers, men and women…) – a safer place. That granted them some freedom as well as possibilities to negotiate with the boundaries of the law, avoiding retribution as long as they maintained forms of respect. The Bush doctors had earnt their right to work and dwell at the street corner. Through this framework of thought, maintaining and nurturing relations and exchanges prevailed over the structured system of the law. Shaping a solid and harmonious web of relationships enhances potential freedom of action. The relational ontology is characteristic of the Indigenous framework of knowledge that promotes, over a substantive

approach, the structuring connections within the web of life. On a more global scale, harmony and respect in relationships could be sources of inspiration for contending with the plurality of crises we face in the contemporary moment. These crises include the marginalisation and oppression of Indigenous communities, the rise of nationalism, populism, and exclusive identities, and the environmental decline.

> *'We get all that knowledge from the elders, my lord, the forefathers. It is traditional knowledge, you see. All these plants, they were already in the Garden of Eden. You see this big tree there,' Jo pointed at a tree right across the street, 'HE is maybe three thousand years. Plants, trees, etc. they live longer than us.'*
>
> *'But… Is the Garden of Eden a Rasta thing?' I continued in order to dig deeper into the discussion.*
>
> *'No, my lord, it is not a Rasta thing. We are all in the Garden of Eden, even now. That's why we need nature around us. To connect. We can go to the mountain also and collect plants, traditional medicine. These big trees around, they have leaves, branches, bugs… All that is connected. It's also connected with us. We are all one, one in the Garden of Eden.'*

This discussion permits to question the presumed dichotomy between an urban environment, supposedly represented by the street corner, and nature. Indeed, how did the Bush doctors compose and apply their knowledge in an urban setting? Jo contributed to inform this problematic on various discussions. The exchange above occurred at the beginning of our relationship while he was describing his working environment and presenting his conception of the entangled space. Jo could feel nature intertwined within his surroundings. The idea of '*Garden of Eden*' overcame the visible. Concrete and buildings could not overshadow Mother Earth lying deep inside. That reminds Anna Tsing's concept of Ghosts, those hidden memories of haunted lives sheltered within the landscape (2017).

Furthermore, through that approach, humans appeared decentralized from the centre stage. For example, Jo used '*He*' to define the tree. He stressed a pivotal need to connect and embrace the worlds through interdependencies. '*We are all one, one in the Garden of Eden'*. This oneness existed between humans, animals, nature, spirits, and ancestors. The framework of thought displayed eventually permits to reconsider the human's place within the environment and enhances a better understanding of the connections and relations structuring the worlds. It informs the concept of relational ontology and echoes with numerous authors focusing on the governing interdependencies within the web of

life (Chengxin 2018; Haraway 1984; 2003; 2008; Medina 2014; Qin 2018; Reddekop 2014).

A second exchange with Jo nurtured the idea. Replaced by manmade elements, the vanishing landscapes appeared to host histories of life's enmeshments and complex relationships that went beyond the human/non-human relations.

> *'The people around, they don't know that here, on this road, on this street, on this corner, there is the bush. The herb is growing under the road. Life is underneath, beneath the surface. The worms, the small animals, the insects, they are still here deep down. Ancestors, my lord, ancestors were living here, with their stocks, their family, etc. Our forefathers, they were the rightful owners of the land, but people don't know that. They don't see that there is medicine, that this tree is medicine, that everywhere around there is nature, ancestors, etc. And look here now, I am talking about here, right where we are. I am not talking about the mountain, Eastern Cape, or Northern Cape. I am talking about right here, where we are standing right now. People around, they don't know that the bush is Indigenous medicine. We must acknowledge them. I believe that is a part of my role.'*

Jo's speech reasserts the interpretations established above. The connections with ancestors, lands, and medicinal plants seemed possible even in a supposed urban setting. The framework of knowledge that the herbalist displayed overcame the obsolete dichotomy between urban, or manmade, and natural, and contributed to decentralizing the human from the centre stage. Although the surrounding did not help in establishing connections with nature and ancestors, Jo stressed the infinity of potentialities. Again, embracing a relational ontology, as promoted by Jo, can participate in a better understanding of the relationships structuring the worlds and foster global reconnections with the underlying and hidden interdependencies. This is pivotal to challenge perspectives that consider the human disconnected from the environment and promote men's control over nature.

On a more pragmatic level, the proximity to the Mountain[27] and the possibility to access the land to gather plants and medicines facilitated the practices. This also influenced the Bush doctors' decision to occupy the space. Through our exchanges, the Mountain, as a general term that includes every mount and hill relatively wild and preserved, emerged as a sacred place, close to God, where ancestors and spirits were strong. Therefore, in these highlands, spiritual bonds were strengthened, and ritual practices led.

[27] Lion's Head is at a walking distance from the street corner and permits to access Table Mountain.

Remi was a mountain dweller. He grew up in the French Alps, regularly hiking, skiing, or simply enjoying the fresh air of high altitudes. In the Mountain, he could release the stress, recharge physically and spiritually, and connect on various levels. Through the conversation, his doubt surrounding the reasons and legitimacy of his presence at the street corner flew away. He was also claiming access to land. He cherished the Mountain and conceived it his home. In that regard, he was in symbiosis with the healers. He understood the underlying relations within the space, the inextricable web of life. The Bush doctors and Remi were all connected through a common claim and perspective of the Mountain. Furthermore, Remi knew that connections overcame the mere human relations, that they encompassed the entire web of life as well as the relations with the spiritual, the ancestors. Yet, Remi still needed to embrace these intermeshed relations…

Finally, the acknowledgment of Jo's forefathers as rightful owners of the land legitimized his practices, beliefs, and framework of knowledge. He considered this land as his own, inherited from his lineage, and occupied by his ancestors simultaneously hundreds of years ago and today. Therefore, he had the right to apply his wisdom and to practice his vocation, or '*role*', in this intertwined space where living and spirits, visible and unseen, manmade and natural, constantly interacted and enmeshed.

To conclude, the Bush doctors chose the space meticulously. Various advantages tended to orient and confirm that choice. Although they did not purchase an official permit to display their knowledge and practice their medicine at the street corner, the healers negotiated their freedom and asserted their position by maintaining harmony with other people occupying the space and nurturing the web of relationships woven. Moreover, they self-claimed their right to inhabit the land and to proceed in that space. Challenging the Western framework of knowledge and blurring the Western binary opposition between urban and nature, visible and invisible, the Bush doctors re-appropriated the space, shaping their working environment on their own terms. However, what did it represent to apply wisdom and practices at the pavement? What was to work in such a space? That is the next point of focus.

2) *Working at the corner*

A Friday morning around 10 a.m., I arrived at the street corner. At the same time, Jo came out of a taxi carrying his big backpack full of medicine. After we greeted, he dropped the

backpack and waited under the sun, warming up his body. Ten minutes later Gad hoped out of another taxi. His large smile when he saw Jo and I spoke for itself, 'a nice day to work and chill at the corner,' he must had thought. After thirty minutes basking under the sun, they started to unpack, slowly, waiting for the neighbour fruits vendors to set their own stalls and liberated crates. Then, they could use the extra crates to lay methodically their various herbs, roots, plants, stones, and ointments. They would eventually keep some crates to sit, making the space more comfortable for the long day of work ahead. Indeed, they would stay at the corner until 6 p.m., when Kora started to close. Once everything was set up, Jo ground some marijuana, stuffed the chalice, and pulled after a brief prayer. It was around 11, and now, they could start working herbs.

Starting the day at the corner challenged what the productive-oriented Western capitalist model promotes. As Simon often said, '*we need to release the stress, be humble, and enjoy the instant.*' In our society, enjoying the instant has been supplanted by a constant quest for profit. Simon's statement can inspire and contribute to rethinking our relations with time, work, and money. Releasing the stress and pressure implemented by the continual research of profit and productivity would have positive impacts on our society, emphasizing happiness and well-being over money and control. In the field, the beginning of the day often appeared slow, reminding Duneier's description (1999) of the Greenwich Village book vendors who regularly wait for various reasons before starting (they wait for their associates, to sober up, for a table...). Similarly, the Bush doctors appeared calm and patient. The boundaries between 'chilling' and working seemed tenuous. Moreover, being his own boss and not being accountable to anyone permitted some freedom of action. Indeed, the Bush doctors did not answer to any hierarchy in their work and could organise their occupation the way they wanted. In addition to having their specific conception of time, they occupied the space freely, of course always considering and respecting the passers-by. For example, they always left some room on the pavement to facilitate the flux of people. By respecting this unwritten rule, thee Bush doctors could dwell at the corner on their own terms, mostly in peace and harmony. Overall, I consider embracing an alternative framework of thought in the reinterpretation of notions of wealth, well-being, and power.

Remi was flowing on his interlocutors' time conception. He too was relatively patient and rarely rushing. He enjoyed this aspect of working at the street corner. 'No pressure' he thought. Nevertheless, Remi did not romanticize the occupation that had its pros and cons. For example, he had difficulties being continuously in the street, constantly interacting with people, always embedded into the flux of passers-by. The street was in constant motion, bustling. It was tiring. Was it one of the reasons the herbalists kept telling him to connect? Was he not enough connected

However, 'a vendor is a hustler, he doesn't know what he is going to get everyday' says Marvin, one of Duneier's contributors (Ibid: 68). Simon's self-conception matched with this description, often stating that he was '*a hustler*'. 'Hustling' is also a recurrent theme in rappers' depiction of the street corner life. In the case of the research, although having great freedom of action and their own time framework, the Bush doctors were aware of their situation: they needed to attract clients and sell medicine to '*put food on the table, no more*' would eventually state Simon.

After Jo, Gad, and Simon finished their late lunch, a vegetarian sandwich bought near the taxi rank, a lazy climate settled in. Discussions centred on the program of the weekend, on soccer (Jo was a Liverpool supporter), and on the beautiful women[28] passing by. Nevertheless, Jo decided to overcome that afternoon lethargy by preparing a burning medicine. He added to the regularly consumed White Sage different roots grated, branches ground, and bulbs finely chopped.

'That, we call it White Woman Breast!' he told me showing a thick branch with a white grated extremity. 'And this one, we take it directly from the tree, we peel it.'

Mixing all the components together, he lit the medicine that he placed under a grater, protecting it from the wind.

'That's medicine, my lord. I made it to bless the moment and make people come. It's to connect but also for business. The people, they will see that we're for real, working herbs. We're not here to do nothing, waste the time. I did this medicine for three reasons: to connect with ancestors, attract people, and for business. It's like a lucky charm.'

'So now, what do you do?' I asked to understand the full process.

'Now, you just wait. You listen to the ancestors, wait for them to guide you. You don't wanna rush. You respect the moment, stay patient, and humble. You thank Jah; everything will come if you have patience.'

A few days later, following Simon's demand, I saw Gad doing a similar mix, although changing some components[29]. 'This is to bring positivity. To bless the moment,' Gad eventually stated.

Therefore, the prepared burning medicine and the patience displayed in the process underlined the difference between the group of Bush doctors' worldviews and the Western framework of thought.

[28] I further unpack the ambiguous gender relations through the work.

[29] Due to my lack of experience with the medicine practiced, I did not recognize precisely which plants, roots, barks, and bulbs Gad used.

For the contributors of the work, 'tout vient à point à qui sait attendre'; or in English 'Good things come to those who wait'. Living and respecting the moment was pivotal. Patience emerged as a key quality. Moreover, these '*lucky charms*' encompassed the ideas of relational success, connection to ancestors and Jah, and respect of a specific moment. Therefore, success was not personal but an embedded experience. This conception of success can eventually participate in building humble dispositions that challenge the global navel-gaze structuring the present moment. Enmeshed networks of relations and connections contribute to success. We must be humble and consider the complex and intertwined web of life. In that regard, working herbs involved the human world as much as the spiritual and animal ones, all realms being interconnected and interdependent. Stemming from these enmeshments, medicine, through an alternative worldview, was a holistic enterprise that did not merely focus on the curing of apparent symptoms[30]. This echoes with John Mbiti's vision of 'Religion [that] permeates into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it' (Mbiti 1969: 1). Therefore, religion and medicine focus on the idea of harmony between interdependent worlds (human, animal, spiritual). In the work, Bush doctors embodied an alternative way of doing medicine, of working, and of thinking the worlds and the environment. Their framework of thought contributed to blurring dichotomies and overcoming arbitrary and rigid categories.

> *Futile discussions (around soccer, cars, etc.) were moments of rest for Remi. He was speaking as much as listening, freely, without complex. He looked relaxed and having a good time. However, when Jo started the preparation of the medicine, the real fun began. Remi stood up, looked at the herbalist's actions, and start questioning. Profoundly interested, he was quieter, focused on the healers' answers, paying careful attention to details. Was Remi still connecting? Did he suddenly become an observer; a distant researcher embedded in his field? Jo's words resonated: 'Remi, you must connect'.*

A Tuesday afternoon, deciding to push the discussion on the authorisation to work in a public space, I asked Simon again:

'How did you end up working here? And, did you say that you don't need any authorisation?' He completely eluded the second part of my question, self-appointing 'King of the street corner.' After his rant[31], a motorbike stopped right in front of the stalls.

'Yo, yo, yo my King, you can't park here. No one parks here. Go park your bike a little down the road. Here we are working brother.' He said calmly, joining his hand as if he was praying

[30] I unpack this holistic nature in the last two chapters.

[31] See pp. 31.

the driver. The latter made a sign and parked his engine further down the road. Simon looked at me with a malicious gaze. In some ways, he just proved his point, 'King of the street corner'. 'If one person parks here then everyone will do the same. People need to see the medicine; you can't block the view you know. How do people come if they can't see what we have? People in their car, in the buses, stopped at the robot, they look, my lord.'

Simon was an important figure of the street corner as it surfaced throughout the moments that we shared. Regularly, taxi drivers, employees working in the area, and simple passers-by looked for him, greeted him, or sought his advice. His experience at the corner had made him popular and respected. Many times, the fruits vendors and Kora workers addressed him as if he was in control of the space. As Duneier states (1999), the 'sidewalk'[32] is not a place of random behaviour but is governed by norms and codes established by people occupying the space. This correlates with Simon's self-appellation of '*King of the street corner*.' It also reminds the notion of shadowlands (Calleja et al. 2018), supposed chaotic zones that open up opportunities and where norms and codes are established by opportunists. Additionally, Simon depicted Gad as the '*King of his [own] spot*'. Therefore, there was no rigid and established hierarchy among the Bush doctors, each herbalist governing his area, his stall. Mutual relations were always respectful and communal. That eventually demarcates from the master's logic that promotes established hierarchies and strong power relations. Therefore, understanding the Bush doctors' worldview can enhance reconsiderations of power relations. An interesting level of equality structured the street corner and the relational webs woven within. Each Bush doctor could appropriate and organise his spot, always in a convivial atmosphere respecting the others.

Experience and elderliness were structuring parts of the relations in the field. Jo and Gad showed Simon respect praising his experience as a Bush doctor. Gad was also highly esteemed as a Sackman. '*I am talking about more than 10 years with the Sack, Remi. Gad knows his business, he is the most experienced and skilled around,*' would explain Jo. A loose age hierarchy could surface from the relations woven at the corner. Elders were always greeted with profound respect and invited to sit comfortably. One day, someone came at the corner with a peculiar coin. Pat, sitting with the Bush doctors standing around, was the first consulted to attest its authenticity. 'Ask the elder' advised Simon. Elders were consulted, listened, and esteemed.

Overall, the Bush doctors embodied an alternative framework of thought. They challenged the

[32] 'Sidewalk' is an American term. I use 'pavement' or 'street corner' in my work.

Western conception of work. Productivity and regulated time management did not predominate in their worldview. On the contrary, the herbalists let things happen, encouraging the '*good luck*' with their medicine. Moreover, they appeared to re-appropriate the environment, making the pavement their workplace, establishing the codes and rules within. Experience and age shaped respect among the contributors, embodied by the position of Simon, Gad, and the elders who shared the space. However, more than a mere working place, the street corner also appeared as a space to chill, discuss, exchange knowledge. Various people came for various reasons, not only to realize transactions and get medicine. Therefore, what were the relations woven at the street corner? What did people do on the pavement? This is the next point of argument.

3) *A complex space of relations, a way of life*

> *Rambo was speaking with another Kora employee when I arrived. They greeted me.*
> *'Remi, my brother, how are you? Tea break for me and my brother Luthu. We have an hour.'*
> *Then, they continued their discussion in Afrikaans. Jo joined us and addressed me.*
> *'Hoe gaan dit vandag?'*
> *'Ek is lekker' I answered. A smile opened his face.*
> *'You see, my lord, this guy is Xhosa,' he said pointing Rambo's interlocutor, 'but he speaks Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, Zulu. Four languages! Now, this guy here,' looking at Rambo, 'he just speaks Afrikaans. He is lazy, he doesn't wanna learn other languages. We have eleven official languages in SA and this guy just knows one. He doesn't wanna learn,' he deplored shaking his head.*

The exchange stressed two important elements. First, 'overlapping relationships' animated the street corner (Liebow 1967). The pavement often sheltered workers of the surroundings spending their daybreaks. Rambo was a recurrent figure and contributed to the research. Coming from Mitchell's Plain, he knew Jo and Simon '*from way back.*' The Kora employee regularly emphasized his urban belonging, being proud of coming from the 'Flats'[33]. Although not a Rasta or bearing Indigenous knowledge around plants and medicine, he and the Bush doctors showed mutual respect. They seemed to esteem each other and were friends.

Furthermore, the space appeared as a platform to share different points of view and frameworks of thought. Indeed, Jo enjoyed speaking with Luthu to work on his Xhosa. He also committed teaching me Afrikaans. He believed in a constant process of learning, hence his disappointment to witness Rambo's laziness in that domain. In Jo's mind, knowledge must be dynamically shaped, transmitted,

[33] See pp. 75 – 76.

and shared. The street corner emerged as an appropriate space for those projects. The cosmopolitan nature of the environment allowed different bodies of thought to intertwine and complement each other. The space enhanced potentialities of exchanges and contacts. This sharing process eventually permitted to open up new horizons, conceptions, and interpretations. In today's world in which knowledge is accumulated, privatized, and tends toward uniformity, shaping platforms to share bodies of thought can be pivotal. Overall, potential teachings and transmissions were floating within the space that we inhabited. Every opportunity was seized to instruct, learn, and exchange.

> *Remi was exchanging and sharing his knowledge. He showed Gad a few pictures of the French Alps and a video of him snowboarding. He undertook the explanation of the principles of the sport, mimicking a snowboarder descending a slope. Additionally, the process of sharing knowledge extended to Remi's role as an anthropologist and his conception of the discipline.*
> *'My study? It is with you guys, altogether!' he eventually concluded, everyone looking happy to be an integrative part of the research.*
> *Another knowledge transmission touched on the Khoekhoegowab language. Indeed, Remi knew a few notions. The herbalists seemed eager to hear more about it and excited to be in contact with their maternal tongue. Forming a circle, the group would exchange words and greet in Khoekhoegowab. Remi could eventually show interactive lessons on his phone. Motivated by these types of moments, he decided to resume his language formation, believing that he could contribute to his friends' development the same way they participated in his. In collaboration, they were deconstructing and reconstructing a unique framework of knowledge. They were connecting…*

Broadening the analysis, the space of the street corner gathered a constellation of different people. Thereby, I met Zeb, a '*former*' Rasta[34] who started to '*smoke something called Crystal Meth*' explained Jo. He sometimes fetched plants for the herbalists. Simon précised that Zeb, '*goes to the mountain, that's where he lives, to fetch us various plants. Then, we sort him out.*' Drugs emerged as common elements of the space. Discussions and advices were shared on '*Tik*' or Crystal Meth, '*Buttons*' or Mandrax, and '*Wunga*', a cocktail of heroin and other elements. These drugs were common in the Bush doctors' environment, hence the extensive discussions and warnings. The products were used in the Cape Flats, their home neighbourhoods, as well as within the street corner, further up R. Avenue. Addicts often wandered around the area in alternative states. I also exchanged or crossed paths with colourful characters dwelling in the street such as the 'pan-man', who held two

[34] Jo, Simon, Naphtali, and Gad considered Zeb a 'former' Rasta. They denied his belonging because of his drug addiction.

pans over his head while shouting '*I am the pan-man! I am the pan-man*'; or '2pac', introduced by Jo as coming from '*the darkest hole you can find. I respect him for that because look, he is here now. He made it in some way. Where he lives (Bonteheuwel) you're either a gangster or you're dead. 2Pac found another path. We must respect him for that.*' Gang members also passed by the street corner, identifiable with their numerical tattoos. They would sometimes stay for a while and discuss with the healers, coming from the same areas. Elders also spent time in the space, especially Pat, who maintained close relationships with Jo and Simon – the street corner was his recurrent stop before and after his bi-weekly jog – or Tank who '*work[ed] for the government*'. Muhammad, a Pick'n'Pay employee, came every day after work. He stayed with the Bush doctors before catching a taxi going home. Although a devoted Muslim, Muhammad was esteemed and accepted. People at the street corner made no distinction and showed respect for the diverse potential spiritual orientations. Men and women, elders and youngsters, locals and foreigners were all welcomed. A few tourists developed the habit of coming to the corner of Kora. I met a group of Americans who visited several times, seeking to connect with the Bush doctors. Often, the communal consumption of marijuana tightened bonds. Overall, the constellation of people led Jo to reflect that:

> '*Everyone here is a character. Everyone has his own role. This guy there, he looks like one of the Wayan Brothers. You know the actors. This one over there is a singer. He had some success, made some good songs. But I don't think he is singing anymore… And look at this lady, the way she walks. She is playing her own character too.' He said scanning the rich crowd that composed the street.*

Overall, many different people from different backgrounds, religious orientations, and social class mingled within the street corner, challenging the conception of a space merely populated by homeless, conmen, and fakers (Liebow 1967).

Although the relations were not always seamless – I witnessed some people kicked out by Simon who seemed bothered by their presence or behaviour; a few fights broke out nearby the stalls; Naphtali, in debt, was wanted – the cosmopolitan nature of the space made it a great platform to share knowledge, points of view, and discussions. In the global and individualistic capitalist society that surrounds us, these sharing processes and communal dispositions are scarce and progressively lost. Sharing and connecting with others could help to reunite people and eventually rethink the process of marginalization. Connecting with alternative bodies of though could also contribute to acknowledging and legitimizing Indigenous people and their worldviews on a global scale. In the field, the pavement emerged as a rich environment when understood with an open and tolerant mindset. That richness led Simon to come hanging out at the corner even when he did not work or

lay his medicine. '*It's better to be in the street. We can interact with people, connect, exchange. If you stay home you don't see anyone, you close your spirit. Here, we're meeting new people every day, we can make connections,*' he justified.

> *The street corner was a cosmopolitan space. Remi belonged there as much as the other did. He did not stand out from his interlocutors as much as the first sight could have let believe*[35]*. They were all playing a role in the articulation of the street corner life, each one contributing. Remi slowly understood his process of identity negotiation, re-composing with re-appropriated senses of belonging. New structuring elements contributed to shaping who he was and who he would become. His interlocutors seemed always happy when he joined them. They never rejected him. They wanted to connect as much as he did. However, Remi had still a long way to go, an everlasting way to go…*

Overall, the street corner appeared structuring in people's lives, challenging the idea of a simple working place. Within the space, life stories intertwined, entangled, and nourished each other. The 'sidewalk', 'a site for interactions that weakens the social barriers between persons otherwise separated by vast social and economic inequalities' (Duneier 1999: 71), sheltered a wide range of different customers, passers-by, and 'overlapping relationships' (Liebow 1967). Students, elders, workers, unemployed regularly met and interacted. Rastas, Christians, Muslims, etc. respectfully exchanged, without judging the others' cultural and spiritual orientations. Social barriers seemed blurred and overcome. The following episodes assert that rich and cosmopolitan nature.

> *A Tuesday, a Xhosa woman came to treat a recurring pain in her wrist. She seemed hopeless, not knowing what to do.*
> *'I can prepare you a mix that you need to drink.' prescribed Jo. 'You pour a full kettle of boiling water and let it infuse for two hours. Then you filter it. Three cups a day.'*
> *The woman nodded negatively. She did not want to absorb any decoction.*
> *'It's pure medicine. No side effect,' encouraged Simon who was listening to the exchange.*
> *'Look here,' continued Jo, 'it's better if you drink it. It heals from the inside. Rubbing medicine on the wrist is less effective.'*
> *Meanwhile, a regular client arrived looking for Buchu. Simon jumped on the occasion.*
> *'Look!' He told the reluctant customer. 'That sista here, she knows it's pure medicine, coming from the ancestors. It works.'*
> *After a brief conversation between the two women, the regular one managed to convince her interlocutor. This latter left with her mix, ready to drink and heal the pain. Through the*

[35] See pp. 2, 36 – 37, and 43.

episode, everyone contributed. Jo made the mix. Simon, although not working that day with his stall not set, encouraged the hesitating woman. Finally, the regular client helped to convince the first arrived. It emerged as a communal work, as it often was.

On another occasion, a Xhosa elder stopped at the corner seeing a little orange round fruit. 'Oh, Tuma!' he exclaimed. 'To clean you up. You eat a very small portion of that and it cleans you from the inside... Everything gone, it flushes it away, like that,' he continued while snapping his fingers and walking away smiling.
Jo's eyes enlightened. 'The elder knows his thing!' he shouted to the man leaving who eventually participated to legitimize the healer's healing practices and knowledge.

A few days later, an old and well-dressed white lady came looking for Buchu. She engaged in a small discussion with Jo, Simon, and Gad around the beauty of the marijuana plant that she eventually grew for decorative purposes. She also brought a few stones that 'she had promised' would explain Simon.

Additionally, I witnessed a student coming to spice up his sex life, or a woman that sought to get pregnant. Simon's prescriptions and advices seemed to cheer them up, as they were excited while leaving the street corner. 'With that, you'll be strong my bruh' or 'I assure you that in nine months you'll be a mom' were the types of encouragements that animated the clients.

At that stage, a note on gender relationships is important. As Duneier (1999) states, the 'sidewalk' is not a neutral environment. In the research, women were often stared, accosted, or invited. The group of Bush doctors regularly tried to gain attention, especially through compliments. While some women seemed upset or disinterested, others eventually waved, stopped, and discussed with the herbalists. Therefore, the healers sought feminine company and seemed to welcome women within the space, although as objects of desire. Before drawing early conclusions on that matter, that consideration on gender must be replaced in its particular context. The Bush doctors' identity is rooted in specific relations, worldviews, and histories; considering these relations from a Western perspective could lead to misinterpretations. Nevertheless, regarding the actual situation, the rise of inequalities, and the horrendous violence against women, these specific relations must be treated carefully. Considering women as objects of desire is a concrete source of concern, contributing to the growing binarization of gender and reasserting power relations. This echoes with Duneier's interpretation (1999) of potential ways to reinforce men's power and to re-actualize the masculine structure of

control[36] within the space of the street corner.

Although women seemed often welcomed, a debate rose surrounding their potential involvement in the occupation. While Simon believed that women affected the medicine through their menstruation, Jo and Gad recognized that some, although not a lot, were working herbs. Moreover, families rarely participated in the life of the street corner besides Naphtali who enjoyed spending time with his wife and daughter in his working space. Simon believed that:

> *'The street is not appropriate for the family, it's a working place. You don't bring your wife and kids to the office, right? And here, there is pollution, noise, a lot of cars, people, the police...'*
> *'It also makes it tough for us to work sometimes. We don't have a lot of time to spend with them so some like to bring their family. I don't think it's a good place for them though.'*

Overall, the herbalists were able to reach a broad audience. A wide range of people interacted at their counters, coming for various reasons. Passers-by entered the space seeking medicine and treatments, hoping to trade goods, exchange knowledge, discuss, or simply greet. Some came for insurance, promises, and potential sources of happiness. Regularly, the knowledge shared, dispensed, and transmitted sparked hope to the clients. Many times, people left the stalls happy, even when nothing was purchased. Numerous discussions and connections blossomed. Although gender relations appeared unbalanced and the space was not considered appropriate for families, a communal atmosphere prevailed, with people helping and assisting each other in spite of their cultural, spiritual, and social differences. This communal spirit was evident through the herbalists' management of their counters. One Bush doctor would often take over the other one stall when needed. '*We work together you see, like that people don't wait,*' stated Gad. '*It's better to help each other. We want good relations while we work.*' Often, they shared their medicine, exchanged/split their money in honesty and peace. Globally, this enriches the reflection on working relationships. Nurturing and maintaining tight bonds with colleagues contribute to developing fluid and prosperous working conditions, facilitating and enhancing the occupation.

To conclude the chapter, the herbalists chose their space carefully. The crossroads between R. Avenue and Main Road emerged as a cosmopolitan area in constant motion, enhancing economic and social

[36] I try to tackle gender relations throughout the research.

opportunities. Furthermore, constantly negotiating with the boundaries of the law, the Bush doctors and their framework of knowledge challenged Western mainstream conceptions of life, society, and medicine. This resistant worldview promoted harmony in relationships and respect toward others sharing the space. The contributors of the research, structuring parts of the life of the street corner, were 'public characters' (Duneier 1999: 6) and contributed to shaping a safer environment.

Understanding the connections between the various elements of the worlds was pivotal in the articulation of the herbalists' everyday life. The group of Bush doctors embraced a relational ontology, interpreting life, medicine, and religions in holistic ways. Their profound enmeshment within the web of life and the awareness of the underlying interdependencies with nature, ancestors, and others permitted to overcome Western dichotomies such as urban/natural and contributed to decentralizing the human from the centre stage. Globally, this worldview is at the foundations of Indigenous frameworks of knowledge. Furthermore, the Bush doctors claimed their right to land through their ancestry, legitimizing their practices and occupation of the space. Working according to their time conception and without being accountable to subordinates permitted them freedom of action, although they were aware of the necessity to '*put food on the table*.' Nevertheless, the focus was not on productivity but rather on patience, respect, and harmony. The occupants of the space structured the street corner establishing rules, norms, and codes. Negotiations with the laws occurred continuously. Each Bush doctor dynamically re-appropriated the pavement, as '*King of the street corner*.' Experience and age implied respect and trust. In that regard, Jo often stated '*elders speak the truth.*'

Finally, gender relations seemed unequal through the exchanges witnessed. Although women were objects of desire, which is an important source of concern, everyone seemed accepted in a space of shared knowledge whatever the sources, backgrounds, and heritages. Overall, the street corner occupied by the herbalists emerged as relatively complex. It was a transitory space for some passers-by, but for others it functioned as a pharmacy, a medical cabinet, possibly a therapist's sofa, or even a potential classroom. Exchanged were both formal and informal, job-related or for entertainment purposes.

To conclude, my experience of the street corner life seems quite distant from the conceptions presented in the literature review. Many different characters dwelled in that space, not only conmen, homeless, and low-income black people (Liebow 1967), alongside more transient and out of place white people. Nevertheless, the promotion of an alternative framework of knowledge emerged as pivotal and the idea of 'hustling' surfaced. The partial aspect of the research does not permit to draw general conclusions on the diverse and multiple street corner lives. Although I witnessed some fights and violent exchanges that amused my contributors, extensively discussed on gangsterism and drugs,

and eventually crossed paths with gang members and drug consumers, my experience of the pavement was peaceful and harmonious. Relations were shaped, discussions established, and knowledge shared, learnt, and transmitted. However, what type of knowledge was shared and where did it come from? How did the healers legitimize it? Finally, who were these healers, how did they identify? Those are the principal focuses continuing the discussion.

V – We are the KhoeSan

Connecting with the group of Bush doctors unfolded a plural and complex identity negotiation constituted with processes of re-appropriation, re-composition, and self-assertion. Diverse sources and lineages seemed to structure the production of knowledge displayed and shared at the street corner. Therefore, the identity of those who contributed to that work appeared multiple, dynamic, and constantly re-shaped. Understanding the negotiation of one's belonging as never complete, fluid, and dynamic can participate in the deconstruction and re-conceptualization of the global interpretation of identity. It can contribute to re-interpreting the notions of agency, power, and marginality. In their identity production, the herbalists promoted their Indigenous sense of belonging, framework of knowledge, and heritage. They claimed a KhoeSan affiliation.

> *'Is this KhoeSan plants?' I asked, during the initial encounter with Jo, Simon, and Naphtali.*
> *'We are the KhoeSan,' Jo answered. Then, he slightly digressed. 'KhoeSan is one big group you see. You have Griqua, Khoekhoe, Bushman... But we're all KhoeSan.'*
> *Later that day he continued his explanation around his Indigenous belonging.*
> *'Look here, my lord, us: me, him, him…' He said pointing his associates, 'we are the Indigenous people of the Cape. The rightful owners of the land. What we do is traditional medicine.'*
> *'KhoeSan medicine?' I risked again.*
> *'KhoeSan medicine, my brother. Indigenous medicine,' he concluded.*
>
> > *Why was Remi emphasizing so much on the potential connections between his interlocutors and the KhoeSan identity? Did he have a guiding thread? Was he looking for specific answers? He would soon understand that he was not the one leading the exchanges, that his interlocutors could choose what to say and talk about, and that they were studying him as much as he was studying them. He would soon understand to reconsider his opinions and preconceptions. He would soon understand that he needed to listen and connect in order to grasp his interlocutors' identity negotiation.*

Jo considered several groups constituting what general knowledge defines as KhoeSan. Indeed,

during the precolonial period, the Indigenous people of the Southern tip of Africa organised in clans. They spoke different dialects, lived in diverse areas, and varied through their practices and beliefs. Some were pastoralist while others were hunter-gatherer. The colonial oppression and segregation eventually blurred these local particularities and plunged Indigenous populations into cultural confusion and oblivion. Leonard Schultz, seeking to justify the German genocide against the Nama during the twentieth century, shaped the conception of a 'single Khoisan race' (Mellet no date). In social science, Isaac Schapera (1930) eventually popularized this encompassing category. Today, the promotion of a unified KhoeSan people prevails in the identity claim. Processes of re-appropriation and adaptation have occurred, shifting points of view and reconsidering self-conceptions. Denver, for example, advocates for the *≠Gurokam Khoen* naming, a Khoekhoegowab term that means First people. Additionally, the All-Nama festival in Keetmanshoop aims to gather the various KhoeSan groups as one unified people. In that regard, the world 'Nama' finds its roots in 'Na-i-ma', implying an idea of sharing. It reminds the concept of Ubuntu[37], or the belief in universal connections and governing communal relationships. I consider these philosophies of interconnections, harmony, and hospitality potentially contributing to the improvement of global relations and exchanges between communities, across societies, cultures, people, races, and continents. These unifying worldviews can participate in overcoming processes of marginalisation, oppression, and arbitrary classifications. Finally, the group of Bush doctors with who I exchanged considered themselves KhoeSan. They identified as the '*Indigenous people of the Cape*'.

1) *KhoeSan or Coloured? A structuring dichotomy in the claim*

Jo was always proud to state and claim his Indigenous identity. In a discussion around the relations between KhoeSan and Coloured belongings, he explained:

'The Coloured, they don't know where they come from. They don't acknowledge their roots. Either they don't know or they don't want to know, but one sure thing is that they don't connect with their roots. Most of them won't say that they are KhoeSan, they don't accept that they represent the Indigenous people. They say they are Coloured. Look here now, Imma ask someone. You'll see the answer.'

Jo stopped two passers-by and politely asked what they thought about their belonging.

'Hoe gaan dit my bruh?' He continued in English to permit me to understand the conversation. 'Just a quick question, do you feel KhoeSan or Coloured?'

Both of them answered Coloured without hesitation. Although I did not ask Jo, I wondered on what basis he knew that these two passers-by were Coloured. Was it the use of Afrikaans, the

[37] See pp. 82.

skin-tone, or their general appearance? As they answered, the herbalist turned toward me with mixed emotions.

'What did I tell you? It's sad, my brother. How do you know where you're going when you don't know where you come from?'

> *As the two Coloured passers-by left following Jo's question, Remi seemed troubled. The episode led him to question his identity. Again. Jo's words resonated, 'How do you know where you're going when you don't know where you come from?' Did Remi really know where he came from? What was his identity? Where and with who did he belong? Before connecting with the entire web of life, Remi needed to connect with himself.*

Jo, by acknowledging and embracing his Indigenous identity, his KhoeSan belonging, was able to connect, understand, and re-appropriate his origins and ancestries. The herbalist knew where he came from and who he was, potentially bridging cultural, social, and historical gaps created through years of colonisation, oppression, and segregation. He challenged the arbitrary Coloured category codified during the apartheid era, which he considered disconnected from his identity. Therefore, a continuity seemed to prevail through Jo's worldview, reasserting the consideration of the KhoeSan identity reclamation as a continuum going on since the precolonial period[38]. Generally, the group of Bush doctors with who I exchanged sought to connect, accept, and promote their Indigenous roots, challenging the Coloured belonging. They valorised and highly esteemed members of their entourage who represented the KhoeSan identity, such as Bradley who actively taught the language and promoted Indigenous connections. The Bush doctors showed excitement and respect to people working toward the acknowledgment and promotion of the KhoeSan belonging. '*Him, you must listen. He can explain you everything on the KhoeSan, on our people. He is a true elder, real KhoeSan, he knows everything,*' enthused Gad after the departure of an elder who greeted us in Khoekhoegowab and shared some knowledge within the space of the street corner.

Furthermore, the opposition between KhoeSan and Coloured identities appeared structuring in the everyday life of my collaborators. That opposition surfaced through my Honours' research centred on the KhoeSan identity claim. At the time, activists with who I exchanged categorically rejected the arbitrary and colonial Coloured belonging. In that present research, the herbalists, although aware of the differences and promoting their Indigenous roots, did not strictly oppose the Coloured identity. They connected with people whatever their conceptions and self-interpretation. The Bush doctors presented open-mindedness and adaptability, although they seemed upset by the lack of self-awareness of members of the Coloured community. Therefore, different narratives and points of view

[38] See pp. 1 – 2, 19, and 21.

emerged within the claim, underlining the dynamic aspect of identity formation.

Jo was standing beside me. As Gad was busy with a client and Simon silently sitting on a crate a few meters away, we engaged in a discussion.

'Must I tell you now?' He started. 'Look here, my Granny, who passed recently – she was 82 – told me that when she was little, our people, the Indigenous KhoeSan, were living all together. They were walking barefoot, connecting with nature, learning about plants, medicine. I thought about it later, then, I decided to walk barefoot too. You see, us, we accept who we are, our traditional culture, our knowledge. The Coloured now, they don't accept it. They deny their ancestors, they deny their identity.'

The herbalist paused for a few seconds, then, carried on.

'You know what? I blame the colonial government for that. After 1994, people didn't know who they were. Everyone voted for ANC, even our people. But ANC doesn't represent us.'

'Now, as Indigenous people, we need to keep the cultural knowledge alive. We need to carry on the history. Working herbs is a part of it. It is our heritage as Indigenous people. I consider it my blessing.'

Jo's grandmother contributed to laying the foundation for the herbalist's future Indigenous claim. The relations and exchanges with his '*Granny*' partly structured his own identity, inspired by the recollection of ancestors, '*[his] people, the Indigenous KhoeSan'*. Again, the opposition to the Coloured community emerged. Stating and underlining the Indigenous identity enhanced self-acceptance and self-awareness, while embracing the Coloured belonging was a form of denial and rejection of the true self.

Furthermore, Jo stressed his resistant and decolonial mindset, challenging the government and established system. He blamed the '*colonial government*' for the gaps and discrepancies that his community had experienced. Additionally, he failed to see any connection with the ANC, a movement that did not represent 'his people'. This eventually hints at the Rastafari orientation of his belonging, as a countercultural resistant mobilization (Zips 2006).

The historical, social, and cultural holes that came with the colonial process deeply affected and participated in the re-framing and re-appropriation of the healers' identity. Indeed, connections with ancestors appeared fundamental in Jo's Indigenous belonging, potentially bridging some of those gaps and re-composing potential ancestries. However, the discussions we shared on eventual KhoeSan Gods (Bleek & Lloyd 1911; Hahn 1881) were sterile. Indeed, Jo exclaimed: '*KhoeSan*

Gods? No, there is no such thing... It is One God, One Aim, One Destiny. Just one true God!' The forgotten deities appeared disconnected from my contributors' worldview, too distant from the context in which they lived at the time of our exchanges. These precolonial spiritualities did not represent the healers' conception of being KhoeSan. The cultural, spiritual, and historical gaps created by the years of colonization and oppression contributed to a shift in the interpretation of their Indigenous identity and sparked a personal reshaping of their belonging, on their own terms.

These historical, social, and cultural voids also surfaced regarding language. While the vernacular often constitutes an integrative part of the identity, the group of healers negotiated their KhoeSan sense of belonging without speaking the vastly forgotten Khoekhoegowab or Nama[39]. However, they seemed always excited and passionate about it. Therefore, learned speakers were highly regarded. Furthermore, the ancestors' tongue mobilized various emotions and implied a strong desire to learn. The language brought fascination, excitement, as well as nostalgia to the Bush doctors. '*The ancients could speak the language, but they didn't teach us because their minds got confused with the white rules,*' justified Jo for his inability to speak. '*Now, it's difficult to learn, we just know some words that we heard when we were younger, from the elders. We can hear but not speak…*' Therefore, although they did not speak, they connected with their Indigenous sense of belonging and promoted the ancestor's language in their process of identity negotiation.

> *Remi also maintained strong relationships with his granny. However, he did not feel these strong connections with ancestors, not knowing what his 'traditional culture, [his] knowledge' was. Therefore, the student also faced gaps in his process of identity formation and regarding his relations with histories and heritages. Contrasting with the herbalists, the colonisation did not create those voids but rather the lack of acknowledgment of his own lineages. Indeed, his undisputed French identity did not permit him to connect with his roots and to promote the negotiation process. However, through the exchanges with the group of healers he felt multiple senses of belonging articulating his identity. One of his grandmothers was Italian while the other descended from a Spanish family. His dad was born in Algeria and his mom grew up in the French Alps. Therefore, to what community did he belong? Remi knew who he was as a person but could not identify within a community. Who were Remi's people? The need to connect emerged stronger. Remi wanted to understand himself.*

Finally, Jo conceived his role as a 'bearer' of the knowledge transmitted, reminding Credo Mutwa defining himself as 'guardian[s] of the Umlando or Tribal History' (1964: xv). The Bush doctor sought to transmit the wisdom accumulated and produced to keep the Indigenous knowledge alive and

[39] Today, UCT proposes a Khoekhoegowab language course, partly contributing to a language revival.

overcome colonial gaps. In that regards, the following quote[40] is particularly relevant:

> *'My Granny was a KhoeSan, she transmitted me the knowledge. Now it's my turn to keep the tradition alive. Medicine is forever, it never gets old. My kids, my brothers, they will learn. I will teach them, even if now they are not interested (speaking about his brothers), I will teach them when they're ready...'*

Stemming from the quote, transmitting knowledge emerged as a possible way to bring awareness and self-acceptance within the community. The process of transmission was not limited to the protection of medicinal beliefs and practices but spread to the promotion of self-assertion and re-empowerment. In Jo's identity negotiation, knowing his lineages and origins was pivotal. It contributed to legitimizing his framework of thought and asserted who he was. Furthermore, the act of transmission would carry on the process for future generations, allowing them to avoid past mistakes and misinterpretations.

Gad also enjoyed transmitting his wisdom, not only through teachings and explanations but also through experiences. Indeed, he encouraged and organised the Herb trek, contributing to the shaping of my own body of knowledge. He connected with me and transmitted his medicinal, historical, and cultural wisdom. According to my interlocutors, knowledge was not meant to be owned and kept secret, but spread, shared, and transmitted. This eventually challenges the Western perspective and logic of mastery. The conception of shared knowledge, implying the structuring relational ontology, can contribute to building a rich and effective framework of thought for coping with global issues. Learning and enriching the general worldview through a better understanding of alternative frameworks can have important impacts on our common future.

To conclude, accepting, embracing, and re-composing the Indigenous identity through the KhoeSan belonging contributed to bridging the gaps caused by colonization. The broad and complex KhoeSan claim sought to re-appropriate lost histories and lineages, denied practices and beliefs, and to re-shape a forgotten language. Additionally, it contributed to challenging the imposed Coloured category. Accepting and promoting the KhoeSan identity enhanced potential self-acceptance and participated in raising awareness among members of the community. The Bush doctors who shaped the work cherished moments spent with people contributing to the KhoeSan identity claim and highlighting Indigenous knowledge. They regularly stressed that '*we must know where we come from.*' Indeed, knowing one's origins is an integrative part of the process of identity negotiation. Open-mindedness

[40] See pp. 31 – 32.

and inclusion predominated in the conception of their belonging. Although they challenged the Coloured identity, the herbalists accepted these individuals potentially confused by the underlying colonial history and the dominating framework of thought. Through a resistant and decolonial orientation, they challenged the rigid and oppressive system, shaping their own worldview and personal conception of the Indigenous identity. The herbalists pictured themselves as 'bearers' of the Indigenous knowledge, emphasizing the enterprise of transmission. Moreover, the assertion of the Indigenous identity permitted to legitimize and reassert the wisdom, the practices, and the beliefs promoted. The way the herbalists understood and promoted Indigenous knowledge is, therefore, the following point of development.

2) Promoting Indigenous knowledge

The healers who committed to that research promoted their Indigenous framework of knowledge through their practices and work with plants. The promotion processes constitute the fifth chapter of the thesis that focuses on 'Healing Nations'. The following part presents alternative ways to celebrate Indigenous knowledge.

> *When I arrived at the corner, Gad and Zeb were discussing. I greeted them and noticed Gad's new sackcloth. 'You made it recently?' I asked.*
> *'Yes, boss, I made it myself last Sunday. Everything from scratch. It took me quite some time but it's good, my Brother, it's good.'*
> *'Very nice,' I continued. 'It is KhoeSan paintings on it I see,' referring to the rock art drawings on his Sack.*
> *'You're right my king. We represent the Indigenous people. It's important to know who we are, to accept who we are. Look here, Zeb also represents our people.' He said pointing Zeb's shirt that was scattered with KhoeSan rock art designs.*

Various visible features contributed to the promotion of Indigenous knowledge. For example, the Sack worn by many Bush doctors was an apparent contribution to that enterprise. '*Sackman, I wouldn't say that it's a Rasta mansion,*' stated Jo. '*It comes directly from the Bible. Job wore the Sack to moan the loss of his family. God told him to wear it.*' Gad was Bobo Ashanti before becoming Sackman more than ten years ago. Therefore, fluid processes of spiritual transformation, inner change, and conversion eventually happened, participating in the identity negotiation of my interlocutors. This stresses the dynamic, fluid, and incomplete nature of the negotiation process. Parts of identity can be maintained, shifted, abandoned, and regained. In that regard, Nyamnjoh (2017) underlines the promotion of incompleteness in the enterprise of identity formation. Toward the end of the fieldwork, both Simon and Jo started to wear the Sack. Simon, grieving, decided to repent and

wear the natural outfit again. He quitted and re-entered the orders fluidly. A movement of back and forth occurred, motivated by personal decisions. '*I'll keep it until I feel it's the right time, my lord. I decide when it's the moment to take it off,*' he explained. Jo, on the other hand, went to Knysna Mountains and came back as Sackman, encouraged by his peers. Therefore, being Sackman seemed both a personal and communal decision. It dynamically and fluidly framed a part of the identity of the herbalists.

Naphtali explained, '*I found myself when I started to wear the sack and walk barefoot. I could be myself, connect with God, nature, the ancestors... Now, I can proudly represent the Indigenous people*.' Therefore, not merely to repent, the Sack enhanced connections with the entire web of life, promoting the Indigenous knowledge and sense of belonging. The homemade outfit symbolized a closeness to the environment and bonded with God and the ancestors. Through the visible patterns – from KhoeSan paintings to Rasta colours – and the underlying connections implied, the outfit becomes both a visible and invisible sign in the promotion of the Indigenous identity. The Sack encouraged a re-appropriation and re-composition of histories and cultural frameworks. It underlined the complex and enmeshed character of the Bush doctors' identity and knowledge.

Walking barefoot emerged as another possibility to promote the Indigenous orientation. Jo, following his grandmother's recollection of the KhoeSan forefathers[41], decided to stop using shoes. Again, connections with potential heritages and promotion of the intertwined web of life motivated that endeavour. He could connect with nature and feel the Mother Earth under his feet. Overall, obvious signs of Indigenous knowledge and belonging structure the identity articulation of the Bush doctors. '*People must see to understand, to know,*' stated Simon. Additionally, underlying ways of promoting their Indigenous sense of belonging contribute to the Bush doctors' acknowledgment and re-composition of their knowledge and identity.

> *Remi, in shorts and flip-flops, turned around and showed his calves to the herbalists. They seemed proud to see the two tattoos representing Indigenous Rock art designs, two small Bushmen hunting. 'Remi, show them to the elder,' would exclaim Gad. 'He must see that you're our brother.' Sharing moments at the street corner shaped an important part of Remi's identity. It was not as a researcher that he spent time with the Bush doctors but as a member of the group, a part of the community. The tattoos did not legitimate his position but underlined his perspective and motivation, his will to bond.*

[41] See pp. 61.

In the field, oral stories were concrete ways to emphasized Indigenous knowledge. For example, Jo explained his understanding of the formation and use of the Dassiepiss:

> *'You know what the Dassie is?' Jo asked seeing my curiosity about a rock-looking medicine placed on his stall, 'that small animal living in the Mountain. So, let me tell you, the Dassie, he lives high up in the Mountain. The female, she has her menstruation like our women. But the female Dassie hides in caves to menstruate. Look here, we call that medicine Dassiepiss because the male pisses on the female's rejections. Then, after years and years, it becomes rock solid. The elders taught us, my lord.'*
>
> *He continued explaining the use of the medicine.*
>
> *'It is very good for cleaning your body from chemicals. I would advise it only for women, to clean them from the contraceptive pill and this type of thing. But it can also work for men. It cleans from the inside and boost the immune system.'*

Jo recounted this story to several persons, reinforcing its significance. He did not try to impress me by explaining the origin of the medicine but rather, sought to promote and reassert Indigenous knowledge. '*People doubt sometimes. They ask themselves "does that guy know what he's talking about?" But they see, my lord, once I start talking, they see that I know the medicine,*' he explained after an exchange with a client. Therefore, he constantly sought to reaffirm and legitimize his wisdom.

Jo's interpretation of the Dassiepiss slightly differed from general conceptions. Indeed, the solidified secretion is globally presented as curing epilepsy. The healer did not broach that aspect throughout our exchanges. Rather than undermining his wisdom, this underlines the incomplete nature of knowledge production and healing strategies. Knowledge is dynamic, constantly re-shaped, and open to potential additions. That continual situation of formation was central in the Bush doctors' identity negotiation and worldview.

> *One Monday morning, Simon seemed particularly excited. He just came back from a weekend at home, in Saldanha, on the West Coast Peninsula. While jumping, dancing, and messing around with Gad and Jo, he engaged in a conversation with me.*
>
> *'You see, boss, people walking down the street, sometimes they see us and judge. They think we are not civilized. They think we are crazy. "People are getting CRAZY at the corner." But you can't judge, boss. They don't know what is inside us. They don't see the ancestors' knowledge, the things that we know, the medicine. We must connect with others to understand, connect with people, with what's around. I and I, my lord,' he said as he became more serious.*

In the episode, Simon highlighted the possibilities to overcome judgments and prejudices through the promotion of interconnections. He underlined that the global misunderstanding of Indigenous knowledge was created by neglecting the enmeshed web of life and being unaware of the structuring relational ontology. Jo's previous quote on people's doubts[42] correlated. Asserting and legitimizing their ways of life/knowledge was a continual process, an everyday enterprise for the four healers. Transcending the visible aspects, Simon underlined the unseen, the hidden and invisible nature of wisdom that is unrecognized by the majority that fails to connect. Therefore, reminding Anna Tsing (2017) and her emphasis on interdependencies between the apparent and underlining, Indigenous knowledge considers the unseen. For the group of Bush doctors, inner attributes were pivotal, had to be acknowledged, and promoted. The Indigenous body of thought liberated profound emotions and mobilized buried feelings. In that regard, wisdom emerged as an attribute 'encorporated', knowledge passing by and through the body. It was a matter of experience as much as understanding. As Gad regularly stressed, '*we must experience to understand*.' This passed by the mobilization of every sense.

Simon's argument converged with questions of decency. Indeed, the people who '*judge[d]*' looked through a Western prism and failed to understand the discrepancy between the herbalists' and their worldviews. They projected their idea of decency and sanity into a different context, omitting any adaptation. This eventually connects with Duneier's remark on the subject (1999). The characteristics of the street corner and the ways of life displayed by the Indigenous Bush doctors must be understood through relativism and open-mindedness. Promoting and understanding Indigenous knowledge through an open and 'unprejudiced' mind can participate in the decolonial process, challenging the dominant discourse, and enhancing reconsiderations and reconceptualization.

> *Remi was listening to his loud and excited interlocutors. While watching Simon jumping, he smiled and checked his hand to share his happiness. "People are getting CRAZY at the corner…" Therefore, Remi was crazy too, as a member of the group hanging out at the corner. However, it did not matter. Alongside the Bush doctors, Remi could overcome the judgmental gaze, empowered by the communal feeling. He was not alone, standing among his friends, wandering across the stalls, connecting with people. His interlocutors accepted and supported him. It did not matter if passers-by thought he was crazy; it did not matter if passers-by thought THEY were crazy. He felt strong, connected. They were strong, united.*

[42] See pp. 66.

To conclude, promoting Indigenous knowledge was a complex and enmeshed enterprise. It mobilized both the visible and invisible. The Sack, not only stressing the fluid, dynamic, and incomplete nature of the identity, also underlined the numerous connections structuring the web of life. It symbolized a closeness to God, ancestors, and the environment. Furthermore, it permitted to re-appropriate histories and cultural elements that contributed to the shaping and re-shaping of identity. Clothes, or lack of it, as well as oral histories, discussions, teachings, transmissions, and the displaying of inner wisdom permitted to promote Indigenous worldviews. Experiences appeared pivotal in the continual process of knowledge formation and transmission. In that regard, knowledge mobilized the body, inner feelings, and underlying relationships. The healers continuously sought to promote and legitimize their worldview, overcoming outside judgments and challenging the Western perspective. Overall, reconnecting with the Indigenous framework raised emotionality, a sense of belonging, and eventually contributed to bridging the colonial gaps through the re-appropriation of histories and ancestries. In that regard, the Bush doctors regularly emphasized their relations with ancestors and the influence of forefathers. Therefore, deepening the understanding around the sources of knowledge, as well as around the relations with ancients, elders, forefathers, and ancestors, is the next point of development.

3) *'I learnt from the elders'*

Jo continued the discussion on his early dreams about medicine[43], which eventually led him to fulfil his 'destiny', apply his 'blessing', and follow his will to transmit a knowledge that 'never gets old', on these terms:

'Through the medicine, my lord, we connect with ancestors. That's also why we burn herbs. For positivity and to connect with the ancients. Look here, we don't have the power to heal. That power comes from the ancestors. They give us the knowledge and liberate the power. Then we can heal.'

On another occasion, Simon reflected on his KhoeSan belonging. 'If you don't know Sarah Baartman, Autshumato, or Krotoa, you can't claim to be a KhoeSan. It's part of our history, they are our people.'

The group of Bush doctors regularly underlined the pivotal role of ancestors in their knowledge and identity formation. Initially, I imagined different degrees of relatedness between the herbalists and ancients, elders, forefathers, and ancestors. Nevertheless, my interlocutors pushed me to reconsider my assumptions as they fluidly overcame and blurred these projected boundaries.

[43] See pp. 31 – 32.

Concrete and mythical histories intertwined, interacted, and worked together. Similarly, KhoeSan, Rasta, and Biblical heritages entangled. The healers dynamically re-appropriated and re-composed their plural ancestries. The direct and historical forefathers – Jo's grandmother, Sarah Baartman, or Authsumato – were mobilized as fluidly as the mythical ancestors – Moses, the Queen of Sheba, or Haile Selassie I. The healers could draw in an expanding pool of potential sources of knowledge and lineages, through constant processes of re-composition and re-appropriation. The interwoven KhoeSan, Rasta, and Biblical ancestries all contributed to the negotiation of the Bush doctors' identity. Although ancestries are interdependent and intertwine, in the section, I propose to emphasize the relations with Indigenous lineages.

Retrieving from Jo, the ancestors liberated the Bush doctors' healing abilities, or '*blessing*', and unleashed the potency of plants and medicine (Low 2008). Fumigation and smoking rituals enhanced these connections with ancestors. Jo did not conceive any power inherent to his person but believed that the ability to work herbs and heal was liberated through the bonding with his multiple ancestries, simultaneously KhoeSan, Rastas, and Biblical, both historic and mythic. Therefore, after finishing the burning medicine to attract clients[44] he proposed to '*just wait!*' He continued advising to '*listen to the ancestors, wait for them to guide you. You don't wanna rush, you respect the moment and stay patient and humble. You thanks Jah. Everything will come if you have patience*.' This advice further reinforced the entangled and plural aspects of the ancestries. Jo completed the argument a few days later while exchanging on the authorisation to sell in a public space:

> *'We don't need no authorisation, my lord. We are the Indigenous people, owners of the land. We can work herbs here. We have the knowledge inside us, coming from our forefathers. We need an authorisation for the space, but we don't need no authorisation to transmit knowledge or to work herbs. It is Indigenous knowledge, my Lord, it is in our bloodline.'*

Therefore, Jo legitimized and reasserted his occupation, knowledge, and appropriation of the space through his lineages, his '*bloodline*'. He conceived knowledge as an inner attribute, hidden deep inside, 'encorporated'. He underlined his Indigenous affiliation, which correlated with Simon identifying KhoeSan ancestors as his '*people*'. Nevertheless, Indigenous lineages, again, entangled with additional ancestries. Therefore, understanding the Bush doctors' dynamic and fluid conception of ancestries required a deconstruction of pre-established and rigid notions and a re-contextualization within the permeating framework of knowledge and alternative worldviews shared.

[44] See pp. 48 – 49.

Jo looked at me with the eyes illuminated. 'Another possibility for underlining Indigenous knowledge' he might have thought. He began the conversation:

'Working herbs permits us to reconnect with our Indigenous identity. Look, the elders taught us. Now, it's our turn to teach. You see, my Granny,' he showed me a picture on his phone, 'that woman knew the medicine. Her mother and my mother knew it too. It is a KhoeSan thing to work herbs at the corner. You won't see too many herbalists who are not KhoeSan. Me, I started in 2008. First year I was a Rasta, I didn't work with medicine. A lot of Rasta don't know about medicine.'

'For Xhosa people, the Sangomas, they are also traditional healers. You know what a Sangoma is, right?' he enquired. I nodded and he continued. 'Sangomas, they are like us but different. Must I tell you why now? It's because they pay to learn about a few plants. Us, the KhoeSan, the Indigenous people, we are taught by the elders. The elders teach everyone without making any difference. They teach all the kids. The elders, they don't keep the knowledge to themselves. That's also why I must tell you. I must share, transmit the knowledge or he will die...' Then, the conversation continued on the connection with Rastafari.

The quote underlined Jo's sources of knowledge that participated in the shaping of his identity. The herbalist learnt mainly from his grandmother, highlighting the gender fluidity of knowledge transmission. Elders were potential teachers transmitting without distinction. Although Jo stated that it was a '*KhoeSan thing to work herbs at the corner*', further asserting his Indigenous sense of belonging, diverse sources and origins shaped the framework displayed. Therefore, he established parallels between his occupation and Sangomas' practices, which participated in confirming Mellet's description of strong familial relationships between KhoeSan and Xhosa communities (Mellet no date). The Tuma fruit episode[45] further asserted these connections with Xhosa sources of knowledge that participated in the continual shaping of the Bush doctors' framework. Indeed, sharing and connecting with other frameworks enhance processes of re-appropriation that enrich, permit to adapt, re-compose, and develop a specific body of thought and identity.

Furthermore, Jo jumped fluidly from the Indigenous origins of his medicinal practices and beliefs to Rastafari. Following the same idea, Naphtali justified his Rasta orientation stating that '*KhoeSan it's here, in the Cape, just us [...]. Now, Rasta, it's for everyone, for all nations.*' He later completed, '*Rastas represent all nations; KhoeSan it's us, only here in the Cape, only a particular type of people.*'[46] Therefore, the Bush doctors seemed to consider their identity as a dynamic and plural work

[45] See pp. 55.
[46] See pp. 74.

in progress asserted by a fluid body of knowledge. Through this prism of analysis, being strictly KhoeSan potentially confined and categorized people. It failed to consider processes of inclusion, unity, borrowings, and connections, which were central in the identity negotiation of the group. In that regard, the healers seemed to focus on a large, fluid, and dynamically re-composed Indigenous identity that was shaped through contacts and additional heritages. This conception included my interlocutors within an overarching framework of thought, legitimizing their orientation on a global scale, and shaping a large sense of Indigeneity. Overall, the re-appropriated, re-composed, and re-defined KhoeSan identity of the group promoted dynamism, fluidity, and incompleteness. Inclusion rather than exclusion structured the worldview displayed. With the actual rise of xenophobic violence and the promotion of exclusive belongings, especially embodied by the recent violent outbursts in Johannesburg and Pretoria, I consider pivotal the understanding of identity shaped by potential processes of borrowings and exchanges. One's identity is not static and isolated. To flourish, one's belonging must be understood through the contacts and connections shaping it.

Simon was more reticent than his associates to talk about the sources of his knowledge. Nevertheless, we shared some conversations on the subject. One afternoon, he explained:

'I was taught by an elder living not far from Saldanha Bay, when you go up the N7.'

'Was he family?' I asked trying to capitalize on his good disposition to unveil the sources of his knowledge.

'No, boss, not family. But he was a Rasta, and all Rastas are family you know,' he answered while smelling a branch of Buchu.

'Oh, I thought working herbs was KhoeSan knowledge…' I continued seeking his interpretation of the negotiation between KhoeSan and Rasta frameworks.

'Yes, my lord. The elder was KhoeSan, his grandparents, and his great-grandparents were KhoeSan too. He was working herbs long time ago, way before me. One day I asked him what he was doing. I wanted to know. Then, he taught me, like that. I also learned by myself, just by looking. It is important to watch and figure things out by yourself, Remi Boy.'

'Ok. So, how did you meet? If he wasn't family and you were young...' He reacted promptly. 'My lord, God made us meet. Like God made you and me crossed paths...'

Then, he started encouraging passers-by to stop by the stall. 'Pure medicine, Indigenous medicine sista... Respect elder, I have some nice Buchu for you...'

The quote, again, underlined the dynamic and plural character of the Bush doctors' framework of

knowledge. KhoeSan and Rasta frameworks mingled through Simon's presentation of the Rasta elder. Although the latter bore KhoeSan lineages, he did not share his bloodline with the herbalist. That eventually participates in the overcoming of strict and static Western categorizations. The family went beyond genetics, rather focusing on shared worldviews and close connections. '*All Rastas are family,*' mentioned Simon. The unprejudiced process of transmission was globally inclusive. Everyone could learn and be taught. As Jo previously explained[47], elders were open to share and transmit knowledge, challenging the master's logic that conceived it as an individual property. While the initial source of Jo's knowledge came from his mother's lineage – he was taught by his grandmother – Simon drew from a male elder, reasserting a process of knowledge formation not gendered. Overall, the framework displayed and the sources shaping it linked KhoeSan practices and beliefs with Rasta teachings, as well as with eventual elements retrieved from additional heritages. Gad's origins of knowledge were like Simon's. He learnt from an '*ancient, a Rasta for more than fifty years.*' Working herbs, the elder trained him. Furthermore, similarly to Simon watching the elder, Gad stressed the self-learning process that he had undertaken. Indeed, he tried the other herbalists' medicine, touched, smelt, tasted the different plants during herb treks, and drank the different mixes. He continually shaped and re-shaped his medicinal wisdom. Gad, Simon, and the other Bush doctors were experiencing an everlasting process of learning.

To conclude the part, ancients/elders/forefathers/ancestors were pivotal in the framing of the herbalists' framework of knowledge and identity negotiation. They embodied a complex conception of the lineage, in which concrete and mythical ancestries intertwined. Considered by Jo as a '*blessing*', the potency to heal emerged as an inner attribute, in the bloodline, and eventually surfacing in dreams. The connection with ancestors permitted the activation and liberation of the ability to work herbs and heal. Smoking rituals and fumigation facilitated those connections. Re-composing potential ancestries and lineages allowed the Bush doctors to legitimize their Indigenous identity, promote their knowledge, assert their occupation, and challenge the mainstream society and the arbitrary conceptions attached to it. Ancestries emerged fluid, dynamic, and constantly composed and re-composed. The family became a matter of perspective rather than a question of blood. Overall, the Bush doctors redefined the concept of identity. It was shaped through contacts and borrowings, reminding Tutuola's incomplete character (1952). The group of Bush doctors dynamically interpreted the Indigenous identity and emphasized a fluid KhoeSan sense of belonging, open to changes and additions. Indigeneity at large seemed to prevail. The process of knowledge formation, therefore, was

[47] See pp. 44, 63, 66, 69, 70, etc.

not restricted to a unique source, but drew from various origins (KhoeSan, Rastas, Biblical, Xhosa, etc…), underlining fluidity and dynamism. Finally, the process of learning, a constant work in progress sparked by elders, was inclusive and not bounded by genders, social class, or race. It challenged the conception of knowledge as an individual property. Ancients/elders/forefathers/ancestors contributed to shaping the foundations of their descents' framework of thought. Then, it became the descents' role to bear knowledge, developing, readapting, applying, and transmitting what was learnt. Today, new generations must continue the process and contribute to fulfilling the cultural, historical, and social gaps.

To conclude the chapter, the KhoeSan sense of belonging emerged as an integrative part of the Bush doctors' identity negotiation. Challenging the Coloured category, perceived as denying and rejecting heritages and histories, the herbalists promoted their dynamic, adaptable, and fluid Indigenous sense of belonging and framework of knowledge to bridge the cultural, social, and historical gaps introduced by colonisation. Although the group did not speak Khoekhoegowab, the ancient's language could participate in bridging those voids. The healers of the Kora street corner constantly re-appropriated and re-composed their identity on their own terms, re-shaping their inclusive and fluid Indigenous affiliation. Their decolonial and resistant worldview, connected to Rastafari, sought to promote an Indigenous orientation that emerged as a form of self-acceptance and contributed to raising awareness among members of the community. The transmission of knowledge, partly shaped through the connections with ancients/elders/forefathers/ancestors, was central in that process.

The promotion of Indigenous knowledge embraced both the visible and invisible. Thus, wearing the Sack was simultaneously an obvious sign and an underlying account of the enmeshed web of life. The group of Bush doctors, besides their clothes, or absence of it, promoted their worldview and identity through oral stories, teachings, experiences, practices, and processes of transmission. Knowledge was experienced through the body, 'encorporated', and mobilized feelings. In that regard, embracing the Indigenous framework of thought liberated a broad set of emotions for the Bush doctors. Furthermore, diverse sources dynamically shaped a knowledge meant to be shared and transmitted indistinctly. The process of production emerged as a constant work in progress, not exclusive to a unique source. Legitimizing and asserting their complex worldview and belonging, an everyday enterprise, seemed pivotal for the Bush doctors to challenge external judgments and Western understanding of the world.

Finally, the articulation of my interlocutors' lineages participated in their identity negotiation. It underlined the fluidity, dynamism, and incompleteness of the process. The healers emphasized the

intertwined nature of their heritages and knowledge, in which KhoeSan practices and beliefs enmeshed with Rasta teachings as well as additional inputs. Indeed, through the experience, biblical and Xhosa heritages were re-appropriated. The connections with enmeshed historical and mythical ancestries permitted to liberate forms of power and potency within the healers and the plants, allowing the practice of Indigenous medicine. Again, the group of healers emphasized their constant learning process. They drew from various inputs, sources, and people.

Jo resumed, '*being KhoeSan permits to know where I am from. Being Rasta to know where I go. I need both.*' The Rasta identity is, therefore, the next chapter of the argumentation.

VI – Why am I a Rastaman?

> *Naphtali was standing barefoot at the corner, wearing his colourful and recently made tunic. He seemed busy catching passers-by's glances, greeting, connecting, with his hands joined, symbolizing the seal of Solomon, a sign linked to the Holy Trinity and a form of respect to Haile Selassie I*[48].
>
> *'Ahoy sista, how are you today?' He asked a woman crossing the street. 'God bless you,' he continued as she smiled and nodded.*
>
> *'Irie Rasta!' He told another passer-by who raised his fist showing respect to the herbalist.*
>
> *Naphtali was very talkative and open. He seemed always enjoying deep and passionate discussions. Later that day, he concluded one of our conversations that focused on the purpose of my research by stating:*
>
> *'Look, my lord, KhoeSan, Rasta, it is very close. You see, KhoeSan, it's us, me, Jo, Simon... KhoeSan it's here, in the Cape, just us. There are different groups... But we are all KhoeSan. Just one people. Now, Rasta, it's for everyone, for all nations. Rastas don't make no difference. We are a big family. Do you understand brother?'*
>
> *He concluded by summarizing his conception. 'Rastas represent all nations; KhoeSan it's us, only here in the Cape, only a particular type of people.'*

Napthali's re-appropriated the term KhoeSan through a fluid perspective. As Jo mentioned[49], the notion encompassed different groups. However, Naphtali appeared to consider KhoeSan and Cape Khoe – or Khoena in its plural form - as interchangeable. He stated, '*KhoeSan it's us, only here in the Cape.'* Therefore, a complex process of re-appropriation took place, blurring categories and established boundaries. Nevertheless, there was a possibility that my interlocutor used the term

[48] The name Haile Selassie I means the power of the Trinity.
[49] See pp. 58.

KhoeSan to satisfy my interest and align with the naming I used. Therefore, my presence might have influenced his explanation.

Additionally, the herbalist was aware and acknowledged the negotiation at stake in his identity formation. Although complex and intertwined, that negotiation seemed relatively smooth throughout the field, almost natural. Through the moments shared, the process appeared understood and reflected upon. Although the Bush doctors promoted their KhoeSan sense of belonging, lineages, and knowledge, they had chosen their own way of life and spiritual orientation. They were fully committed to Rastafari. In the same way the rapper Nama Xam voiced in his song, the Bush doctors were 'walking the path [they] chose.'

1) *'Rasta or gangsta'*

Rambo, Jo, and Tank were sitting under the sun, by the robot, exchanging joyfully in Afrikaans. Jo looked at me.
'Yo Remi, you know Manenberg, my lord? It's where the elder lives. It's very dangerous there. Look here now, this guy,' pointing Tank, 'he says that if you're not from there, and you just wait in the street randomly, the gangsters, they know. They spot you from far and come at you. Then you're done. You need a bulletproof jacket to live there, my lord,' and he laughed again. 'The elder said you need a bulletproof jacket…' He repeated amused.
*Rambo carried on the discussion. 'Manenberg, Mitchell's Plain, Phillipi... It's where we're all from. It's dangerous, it's the ghetto there... But it's also nice you know because it's our home. Plain it's all f***** up, but I like it.'*
'But you have to be careful there, Remi,' Tank added. 'You have to be very careful or you get caught. There are drugs, guns, gangs, violence... It's not safe. If you don't know the good people, it can be very difficult. You end up hooked on drugs, in a gang, or even dead.'

First, a brief analysis of the Bush doctors' backgrounds is important[50]. All the contributors grew up in the Cape Flats, the series of townships around Cape Town commonly defined as 'the apartheid's dumping ground.' Poverty, gangsterism, and the drug economy are common elements of these globally unsafe and unhealthy housing areas. Nevertheless, many inhabitants seem to confirm Rambo's love for his neighbourhood. Indeed, the founder of the website www.capeflats.org.za Vincent Williams (1996) reflects, 'you would probably expect me to be all negative and condemnatory of the townships […] because I believe that everyone has the right to decent shelter. But at the same time, the township is a *lekker* place to be.' Therefore, coming from the 'Flats' is an

[50] I develop their backgrounds in the introduction of the Bush doctors (pp. 30 – 33) and throughout the work.

ambivalent experience, simultaneously a source of struggle and pride. In this setting, the life trajectories of my various interlocutors could have turned dramatically. Jo, during a conversation loaded with emotions and pain, underlined his naughtiness before becoming a Rasta. '*I was very naughty, Remi. Now, I am trying to be better. I can't be naughty anymore… But what I did…*' He marked a pause as tears started to stream down his face. '*You see, Remi, it's tough… Very tough. But I wanted to tell you my story, Remi.*' Therefore, Jo seemed to have made life-saving choices in his personal development. The mobilization of his past liberated grief and sadness, alongside the necessity to move on. The description of 2pac[51] correlated. The man came from Bonteheuwel '*the darkest hole you can find.*' According to Jo and later confirmed by Rambo, in that environment, '*you're either a gangster or you're dead.*' In the episode above, Tank reasserted the idea, explaining that '*if you don't know the good people it can be very difficult. You end up hooked on drugs, in a gang, or even dead.*' Therefore, weaving an appropriate web of relationships could help challenging the omnipresent death. Establishing and maintaining the right connections permitted my interlocutors to overcome tragic destinies.

> *Remi felt uncomfortable when Jo opened up. While laying his hand on the Bush doctor's shoulder, trying to cheer him up, he repeated several times: 'now you are doing good Jo, now you are doing good.' Witnessing his interlocutor sharing his emotions triggered reflections in Remi's mind, especially about his personal life trajectory. Indeed, he felt privileged and thankful for being able to grow up in peace and harmony. Remembering his youth never led him to such emotionality. He never cried thinking about the old-time but rather enjoyed recollecting his past. The choices he made, although determining in his life, appeared much easier than the ones that Jo experienced. Indeed, the herbalist's choices were a matter of life and death, justifying the need to connect. Solid relationships and belonging to a community permitted to overcome dramatic life trajectories. Remi could understand Jo's experience but could not relate to his own.*

Overall, these characteristics inherent to Cape Flats' lives conciliate with rappers' accounts of the street corner life[52]. Numerous discussions with Jo and Rambo focused on gangsterism, violence, drugs, etc. In the street, hearing gunshots, facing gangsters, or seeing drug exchanges and consumption became banal experiences for my interlocutors, hence their light-hearted discussion around the bulletproof vest. The way Jo taught me Afrikaans further emphasized the everyday and banal exposition to gangs. '*Agt is eight. You will often hear "Ek is agt" in the place we stay. It means "I am eight," a member of the 28. You know the gang 28 right?*' He asked me in reference to the

[51] See pp. 53.
[52] See pp. 26 – 28.

Number gangs.

Now, I propose to briefly compare living in the 'Flats' and in the Kora street corner in order to understand the discrepancy between these two environments. Inhabitants identified the Cape Flats as ghettos, hence the similarities with the rappers' depictions in the literature review. Many parallels with the lyrics presented earlier[53] emerge. On the other hand, the Kora street corner situates within a relatively wealthy neighbourhood, therefore, disconnected from the rappers' texts. Nevertheless, Jo often mentioned that in Cape Town gangsterism and drugs were a global problem. '*Gangsters are everywhere.*'

Finally, although the herbalists were closely bonded to their neighbourhood, which represented an integrative part of their roots and identity, they, alongside the people I talked to, challenged and rejected the dominant violence, drugs, and gangsterism tied to their environment. In that regard, the Bush doctors firmly denied the use of drugs[54]. For example, Jo and Simon believed that they should cut Zeb's dreadlocks because of his addiction to Crystal Meth.

> *'He ain't no Rasta anymore. Rastas don't do drugs. When people see him smoking that thing they think "look the Rasta is high on drugs". But he ain't no Rasta. That's why we must cut his hair,' Simon told me.*
> *Nevertheless, they still tolerated him around them and 'sort[ed] him out.' 'We are the only ones that keep him. Without us yo... He would be like a ghost, wandering around,' Jo added. 'Tik, my brother, that s*** kills you, from the inside, it destroys you.'*
>
> ֍
>
> *Just arrived at the corner, I noticed a fresh wound on Gad's arm, which he rubbed with ashes. Simon, perceiving my questioning, explained.*
> *'You see, my lord, the Rasta got stabbed. We were at the dancehall, by Mitchell's Plain, and a fight broke out between two ladies. They were both hitting on Gad. He tried to help, separating them, but he got stabbed. Us Rastas, we wanna help, we don't want no violence.'*
> *Gad continued the story, 'You see, my brother, it was not a knife, but a broken bottle. It's even worse. Bad wound... Oh yeah, it was not a clear cut. But the medicine works, my lord, heals. It feels better already. It heals way faster with good medicine, not these chemicals,' he concluded pointing the pharmacy across the street.*
> *'That's why I can't take you with us to the dancehall' added Simon. 'It's too dangerous, Remi*

[53] See pp. 26.
[54] The Bush doctors did not perceive *Ganja* as a drug. See pp 42, 53, and 88 – 89.

boy.'

'Noooo, my brother,' exclaimed Jo who was listening while re-arranging his counter. 'We should take him at some point, when it's not too busy. I want to be there when he comes. He must experience!' He said concluding the conversation.

Besides reinforcing the omnipresent violence of the Cape Flats, this scene underlined Rastafari as a possible alternative path. '*Us Rasta, we wanna help, we don't want no violence*,' stated Simon. Alexander-Brutus (2017) informs that Rastafari 'provides believers an alternate route, a sense of community and belonging, as well as opportunities for economic improvement, power, acceptance, and purpose.' In the field, working herbs provided these economic opportunities and life-purposes. Connecting with nature and with the Indigenous identity liberated these potentialities for acceptance and empowerment. Furthermore, working herbs and connecting with the web of life intertwined with Rasta worldviews. Alexander-Brutus continues by emphasizing the promotion of 'positive virtues rather than violent gang culture' in her analysis of the merging between Rastafari and KhoeSan heritages. Stemming from this, the negotiation experienced by the group of Bush doctors emerged as a 'cultural redemption for Coloured people' (Ibid), further exemplified by Jo's emotional remembrance of his past[55]. Such as sports, music, arts, etc., embracing Rastafari contributed to shaping alternative paths for the contributors, challenging potential struggles and dramatic life trajectories recurrently arising from living in ghettos. The group of Bush doctors was not stunned by these potential life struggles but nourished hope and faith to overcome them.

Furthermore, my interlocutors praised every possible alternative to gangsterism, drugs, and violence. Again, when Jo described 2pac[56], he explained that '*where he lives (Bonteheuwel) you're either a gangster or you're dead, but he found another path. We must respect him for that*.' Thus, respect did not only manifest between Rastas but also included other alternative life trajectories challenging the violence of the Cape Flats. Through their worldview, the herbalists emphasized righteousness. Living the righteous way was not limited to specific spiritual and life orientations. In that regard, Rastafari was not a proselyte enterprise but rather a project imbued with inclusiveness and acceptance of other worldviews. Simon, underlining the importance of righteousness, explained:

'Sometimes, you have to accept what you have. You don't wanna look for too much because if you have a lot you become lazy. You must be happy with what you have, Remi boy...' He paused for a second then continued. 'Yeah, you must be happy and not try to do your own thing, selfish. You must find a good way of living and seek righteousness. Me, I'm here to heal, that

[55] See pp. 76.
[56] See pp. 53 and 76.

is my purpose. I try to show the light to whoever wants to see it. That's what I believe is the righteous way. But everyone has his own way, boss. That's how the world is, everyone different but united. One Love, my brother.'

The Bush doctors constantly sought righteousness. They promoted inclusiveness and oneness through their discourses and framework of thought, considering '*everyone different but united. One Love, my brother,'* concluded Simon.

One day, a mom and her daughter passed by the stalls. The braided head of the young student caught Jo's attention.
'Ahoy sista, check, check,' he said presenting his fist for a fist bump. 'One day, she will be a great leader. I'm telling you Ma, she will lead people, all of us!' He declared respectfully.

Jo promised a bright future for the young girl who would lead people without distinction. '*All of us,*' he mentioned. Although he did not know her origin, spiritual environment, or way of life, he saw potential in the child. Generally, the group of healers showed respect, indistinctly, whatever the skin colour, spiritual orientation, social class, or gender.

One day, a group of American students joined us. We discussed, exchanged, and connected altogether for an hour. At some point, Simon looked at Pat, the elder, and told him happily:
'You see elder, people think that here we are only South African, but I always tell them that it's not true. We are international. Look, they are from America, he is from France, yesterday a girl from Switzerland came to visit. We are international! One big family. We don't make no difference. All together. One Love. Just one and only true love. That's the way.'

I suppose that Simon wanted everyone to understand, hence the use of English. Indeed, they usually exchanged in Afrikaans, but as the group turned international, Simon adapted.

They formed a circle of ten people exchanging at the corner. While the four Americans were speaking with Simon, Jo, and Naphtali, Remi conversed with Gad and Pat. He only briefly exchanged with the visitors. Jo regularly tried to link him up with other white foreigners as he probably perceived potential connections. However, 'we are international' claimed Simon. We. Therefore, why would Remi feel closer to white foreigners than to the Bush doctors? When he first joined the corner, he did not seek to join a group of American students. He initially came asking help and seeking to access the four herbalists' world. He cherished his time with the healers who he considered his friends. He felt proud to be included in Simon's 'we'. Nevertheless,

> *Remi needed to be more open if he wanted full access to his friends' world. He needed to connect without distinction. Bonding was not exclusive to the persons he esteemed. It was a complex, global, and intertwined endeavour. Remi still had a lot to understand. Learning was forever.*

Jo further confirmed the global and inclusive nature of Rastafari. Indeed, informing about his roots and the path undertaken to become Rasta, he explained:

> *'My grandmother, she was going to church. You see these apostolic churches. So, my grandmother, she was going there to pray the Christian god. I went to church too when I was younger. For me, it was not enough. I didn't find all the answers I was looking for. Once I embraced being Rasta, my lord, it really brought something to my life. It opened my eyes. Wow, I found a lot of answers.'*
> *A few minutes later, he asked me, 'Rastas are everywhere. I am sure there are Rastas in France too.' I nodded positively. 'You see, my brother, Rastas are everywhere.'*

Through the various moments shared, Rastafari emerged as a global and resistant movement that challenged the mainstream society and proposed alternative lifestyles. One day, wearing a Bob Marley shirt, Jo explained, '*ya man, we have to represent. Bob Marley is an icon beyond Jamaica. He is like Selassie or Mandela. They are important. They influence the entire world. They have a global impact. He is like Che Guevara or Dr. Einstein*.' The mobilization of Dr. Einstein, while surprising an attentive Simon, underlined the inclusive, contemporary, and dynamic nature of their philosophies[57] and worldviews. Rastafari messages were continually re-shaped according to the time/space. The movement emerged mobile and fluid, adapted and re-adapted to particular contexts. Being South African, Jo mobilized Mandela, a figure with whom he could relate. The reference to Che Guevara further highlighted the global and resistant orientation. Niren Tolsi explains that 'the anti-establishment lifestyle of Rastafari provides a channel for their disenchantment and offers them a community' (Tolsi 2011: 2), hence the idea of being one big family, strongly united, an international community. Many moments asserted the inclusive nature of Rastas' worldviews and underlined the structuring oneness within their philosophies. Generally, Rastafari does not consider boundaries as the movement has permeated and globally spread. *I am sure there are Rastas in France too. […] You see, my brother, Rastas are everywhere,'* confirmed Jo.

As a decolonial enterprise, Rastafari proposes to deconstruct racial ambiguities. This project is pivotal for the Coloured community who has faced and continues to experience identity and racial crises. In the work, 'the colorblindness of Rastafari' (Philander 2012: 140) participated in articulating the

[57] The unity in diversity implies multiple possible philosophies within the movement, hence the plural form.

herbalists' philosophies and ways of life. Oneness emerged as a central element. Furthermore, Jo stated that joining Rastafari '*opened his eyes*' and he '*found[s] a lot of answers*.' Therefore, the movement permeated the social to include Life as a whole. As a holistic enterprise, Rastafari integrated the complex and encompassing process of identity negotiation.

My interlocutors regularly mobilized the 'One Love' idea, emphasizing oneness and universal inclusion. This connects with Philander's 'colorblindness' (2012: 140). The notion of One Love, which became popular thanks to Bob Marley and the Wailers (1977), originated from Garvey's motto 'One God! One Aim! One Destiny!' re-interpreted into 'One Love, One Heart, One Destiny'. Bob Marley's interpretation of One Love implied the idea of harmony among people of different races while Garvey's conception promoted the 'reconciliation of mankind based on an Afrocentric notion of unity by discursive rationality, the power of the reasoning' (Zips 2006: 132).

Nevertheless, in the fieldwork, the inclusiveness/oneness presented some boundaries. A major ambivalence emerged. Indeed, Rastafari required a full commitment and implied strict and rigid conceptions. In that regard, the group of Bush doctors faced numerous taboos around food, alcohol, sex, and gender relations. As described previously[58], women often appeared marginalized, relegated to a background position. Although the herbalists promoted universal respect, inequalities lingered. Women were rarely welcome to work at the corner and often considered as objects of desire. Generally, gender relations are complex and controversial in Rastafari. 'Some claim there is equality, other complain that it is an ideal, seldom practiced' (Zips 2006: 273). Zips adds that 'Rastafari are often criticized for their "androcentrism" and patriarchal subordination of women' (Ibid: 86). Furthermore, the Bush doctors heavily rejected same-sex relationships and homosexuality. For example, I witnessed Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali mocking persons with effeminate manners. '*How can you love another man? This, I can't understand. A man must go with a woman. It's natural. God wanted it that way. A man with another man? It doesn't make any sense!*' exclaimed Jo. Throughout the fieldwork, I also heard violent judgments such as '*better to be a man than a gay...*'

> *Remi left the corner disappointed. Although he tried to nuance the various takes on gender relations and homosexuality, he did not completely confront the healers' points of view. He did not dare to break the relationship woven. However, a gap had opened. How could they think that way? Why do they seem so tolerant on many matters and so narrow-minded on genders? Remi was upset. It drastically brought him down to earth. The episode dismantled what could remain of his romantic vision on Indigenous people. Remi constantly learnt. He must remember*

[58] See pp. 55 – 56.

to stop projecting prejudices and preconceptions.

Understanding Maroon communities, from which Rastafari eventually developed, can partially explain the lack of tolerance that surfaced during the experience. Indeed, fugitive slaves who constituted these societies emphasized the necessity to reproduce in their survival. Through that prism, Rastas do not understand same-sex relationships that fail to serve the reproductive enterprise. However, this potential explanation does not justify the intolerance presented. Such narrow visions on genders and sexuality can lead to savage and violent ends. This must be thoroughly considered.

> *'I and I? What does it mean?' I asked trying to grasp Jo and Simon's interpretation of the concept.*
>
> *'I and I, my lord! I and I it's me, it's you, it's God... It's the power of God that passes through every living and non-living. Let me explain it that way, we are all connected, we are one. That's I and I, my brother.' Jo answered.*
>
> *'God is everywhere, you see. When I found God, I found myself. I understood who I was through I and I. We must share, connect with each other, with plants, with animals, with the ancients... We must connect with everything that contains God's power in it. You must connect, Remi, talk to people, bond with everyone. YOU must connect,' he emphasized pointing my heart.*

Such as the notion of One Love, 'I and I' promotes oneness and inclusion. It emphasizes the relational ontology structuring the Bush doctors' worldviews. Through connections, my interlocutors could undertake different life trajectories that the ones their environment seemed to predestine. Being one, united, and connected, led the contributors of that work to reject gangsterism. '*We are Rastas, not Gangstas,*' hummed Simon one day. Furthermore, as Mutabaruka says, 'everything is just I' (2006: 31). This reminds the African concept of Ubuntu encapsulated by 'I am because you are'. The word Ubuntu comes from the Zulu saying 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' that means a person is through other people. Ubuntu and 'I and I' both emphasize the importance of interconnections and exchanges. Through a relational perspective, interdependencies become structuring. Both concepts challenge processes of exclusions that are dangerously escalating with the rise of nationalism and the spread of exclusive identities. Relational ontologies permit to challenge the Cartesian and substance-oriented worldview. Embracing this project of promoting relations emerges as a potential alternative to the overarching and dominant Western framework of thought. Rastafari has developed the pivotal role of I through the re-appropriation of English. Therefore, *I-tal* stands for natural, *I-rie* for alright, *I-nity* for unity, or also *I-man* for inner man/Rasta... The 'I' comes from Haile Selassie I, reinforcing the

pivotal nature of the spiritual in Rasta philosophies and conceptions of the worlds. In that regard, 'I and I' underlines the inherent nature of the Supreme. Jah manifests in every being.

Jo, underlining his connections with every living entity[59], pushed the conversation further. '*Look, I can look at this tree and feel the energy, the power. It is the same with these stones. They were created by God, they have power. We are connected*.' He completed explaining that '*it's just with things with God's power, created by the Almighty […]. Nature, trees, stones, other people, etc. these are things from God*.' Therefore, 'I and I' overcame the human/non-human duality. That recalls Tsing's work on the Matsutake mushroom (2015) in which she emphasizes connections and contributes to overrunning the illusion of the human/nature duality. She proposes an account of the vital non-human actions that shape our environment and structure our lives. 'I and I' as presented by the healers proposed a similar perspective.

Furthermore, the permeating nature of spiritualities, as holistic religious frontiers, participate in defining one's place in his environment (social, natural, spiritual) and in articulating a worldview. The group of Bush doctors considered God at the foundation of 'I and I'. They stressed the multiple interwoven relationships maintained with the environment, the entities composing it, and the various worlds. They also highlighted the global influence of 'I and I' in everyday life, overcoming a limited interpretation of the spiritual. In that regard, the Aboriginal Australian novelist Mudrooroo states: 'our spirituality is a oneness and an interconnectedness with all that lives and breathes, even with all that does not live or breath' (1995: 33). Therefore, understanding the spiritual through its permeating nature can participate in the reconnection with a framework that has been lost with the rise of modernity and the development of rational/scientific thought. Indeed, the Western framework of knowledge sought to erase the spiritual, the 'animist' nature of the 'other', for the benefit of rationalism and to reach universal truth. However, what would be the word if Weber's notion of 'disenchantment'[60] (Lassman 1989) had not overtaken spiritual worldviews? The reconnection with alternative knowledge frameworks and modes of thought could unveil different options and emerge as a crucial deployment to cope with the crises that we face. Indeed, all of us hooked on the drug of Modernity must learn.

> *Could Remi – a French student who grew up in Europe and followed the Western modes of education – be part of 'I and I'? Could he understand the energy shared, the communal bonds, the relational ontology promoted? Maybe he was only a faker, a conman… However, here he*

[59] Are stones and rivers natural being? In New Zealand, the recent recognition of the Whanganui River as a living entity tends to confirm the hypothesis. Mudrooroo's quote (1995: 33) also considers this aspect. In the work, the healers' framework of knowledge also correlated, furthering potential connections between Indigenous' worldviews.
[60] Although this idea of disenchantment has been the centre of numerous debates and critics.

was, at the street corner, sharing life moments with the group of Bush doctors and the persons of the pavement. Here he was, reflecting on his position, understanding, and dynamically shaping his identity. Here he was, trying to challenge Babylon, to quit on the drug of modernity, embracing an alternative framework of thought and deconstructing his prejudices and preconceptions. He was I and I was he. Here he was, trying to connect. Here they were, united, together.

To conclude the part, Rastafari participated in shaping the Bush doctors' alternative life trajectories. The group of healers, who came from difficult backgrounds, promoted inclusion and oneness through notions such as One Love and 'I and I'. The worldviews displayed, structured by a relational ontology, led to fundamental choices and challenged potential lives of gangsterism, drugs, and gangs. My interlocutors were '*Rastas not Gangstas.*' They respected the others making the 'right' choices and living righteously, united, colour-blind. Although Rastafari, a decolonial and resistant movement, aimed to deconstruct racial ambiguities, challenge the system, and promote global inclusion, gender relations were relatively ambiguous. The group with whom I exchanged strictly rejected same-sex relationships. Finally, the importance of the spiritual emerged through my discussions. God was everywhere, and as Jo mentioned, '*we are our own true Gods, the Gods of Earth. […] We are our own churches too.*'

2) 'We are our own true Gods'

Jo was contemplating the sports car stopped by the robot. He greeted the driver with respect. The herbalist admired big engines, powerful cars, and fast motorbikes. While looking at the tailpipe, he exclaimed:
'Look here, the pipe, it looks like the sign of Jah, the Holy Trinity. Must I tell you now?' I nodded and he carried on. 'I and I, my lord, God is everywhere, in everyone. You see, I and I is connected with everything that God's made, the tree, the plants, the medicine, the stones... Everything with God in it, with God's power. And here, on Earth, we are our own true Gods, the Gods of Earth, because Jah is in every one of us. We don't need churches or buildings to connect with Jah because we are our own churches. You know what I mean?'

Again, the permeating nature of 'I and I' manifested from the argument. The spiritual structured the everyday life of the Bush doctors. Every surrounding element could remind and reinforce the enmeshment with Jah. In that regard, hand-checks with the index and thumb connecting

with the interlocutor's same fingers symbolized the Holy Trinity, as Jo explained[61]. Clothing and apparels often represented Haile Selassie I, his wife Empress Menen Asfaw, Marcus Garvey, the Lion of Judah, or the representative colours of the movement: the red, gold, and green. The healers sharing knowledge and experiences with me constantly projected Rasta symbols in their environment. They felt God's power passing through them. Furthermore, this omnipresent perception of the Supreme allowed each one of us to be his own God, a 'God of Earth'. The here and now became central, challenging eventual after-life projections. The Wailing Souls confirm in a song (1978), 'Jah Jah gave us life to live/So let us live.'

The connections with natural elements, loaded with God's power, and the rejection of manmade constructions, such as churches, emerged throughout the previous vignette. Nevertheless, these connections remained aligned with the contemporary context. Although the group of healers sought to challenge Babylon, they talked about cars, football, and eventually presented materialistic life conceptions. Nevertheless, those aspects did not structure their worldviews. They acknowledged and understood the world they lived in, composing and re-composing according to the context. For some, this proves the tamed nature of their identity however, I conceive these adaptations as underlining the fluid and dynamic nature of the healers' belonging. Therefore, the herbalists did not live as complete outcasts categorically rejecting the social environment in which they lived. They coped with the overarching society. For example, I saw the Bush doctors eating Nik Naks and drinking soda but keeping in mind eventual taboos and beliefs structuring their worldviews. The group of Bush doctors aligned with their time and context, constantly adapting, negotiating, composing, and re-composing.

On December 11, I brought cupcakes and drinks to celebrate Naphtali's birthday. We had a good time all together, the four Bush doctors, Napthali's wife, his daughter, and me. We appreciated the moment and discussed the important day. Naphtali explained:
'You see, my lord, every day is my birthday. I am blessed from God to be alive. I thank him every morning when I wake up and every night when I go to sleep.'
'I am curious brother. How do you think your God is?' I asked.
'God is not black or white. He is brown, like the soil,' he explained. 'He is like us. You see, my lord, our blood is red like animals and our God is brown like we are.'

[61] This interpretation of the hand-check is Jo's interpretation. Philander (2010), on the other side, interprets the greeting by mobilizing the two seven clash, a concept influenced by Garvey's prediction of reigning chaos when the 'sevens' clash on July 7, 1977. However, Jo never mentioned the concept. This alternative interpretation of the hand gesture underlines the dynamic character of Rastafari and the importance of self-interpretation in the identity process.

From dusk to dawn, an omnipresent God accompanied Naphtali. The healer minimized the importance of the day as he was continually '*blessed from God to be alive*.' Furthermore, Rastafari could participate in fulfilling the cultural and religious gaps of the colonial process. Indeed, the Rasta Indigenous healers connected with specific religious frontiers and re-interpreted God at their image. Naphtali pictured God '*brown like the soil, [...] like we are.*' In similar fashions, the Nation of Islam, a religious and political movement founded in 1930, found success among African American communities partly through challenging a blue-eyes blonde-hair Jesus disconnected from their identity. Therefore, spiritual re-considerations occurred, bridging the gaps between people and the God they worshipped. Naphtali highlighted this process in the vignette, in a different place, epoch, and context. As previously stated,[62] the group of Bush doctors did not connect with KhoeSan deities (Hahn 1881; Bleek & Lloyd 1911). The cultural and religious gaps might have been too important. Therefore, they adapted, negotiated, and framed their own spiritual conception.

> '*Do you ever pray KhoeSan Gods?' I asked Jo one day.*
> *'KhoeSan Gods? No, there is no such thing... It is One God, One Aim, One Destiny. Just one true God.'*
> *Then, he carried on with passion. 'It is like Cain and Abel. You see, it is either good or bad. Either Rasta or KhoeSan. King Selassie is our true God. Some believe in the forefathers you see. Me, I focus on Rasta, only Rasta. Here, we are our own Gods, the Gods of Earth. One God, One Aim, One Destiny, my lord.'*

Therefore, Jo's commitment to Rastafari was total. The full implication that he presented did not leave any possibility to reconnect with the forefathers' spiritualities or deities such as *Tsui//Goab, //Gauab,* etc. The spiritual re-composition, far from taming the Indigenous identity, allowed claimants to adapt according to their own terms and perceptions. The dynamic and mobile negotiation occurring was aligned with my interlocutors' contemporary context. Therefore, worshipping a specific God was one identity marker but did not prevent other senses of belonging to participate in the framing of the complex overarching identity. While not praying KhoeSan deities, the Bush doctors actively claimed their KhoeSan belonging and lineages. Although Jo's spiritual focus was '*on Rasta, only Rasta,*' other senses of belonging structured his identity. Furthermore, Rastafari reasserted the Indigenous claim, bridging cultural and religious voids. Overall, identity emerged as multi-layered, with different senses of belonging contributing to its formation and production, hence the idea of negotiation. Understanding multiplicity within the process of identity negotiation could encourage the development of new interpretations and inclusive/encompassing frameworks of thought.

[62] See pp. 61 – 62.

Interested by Naphtali's long and respectful greetings to other Rastas, I asked what he usually said. He explained by joining his hand as if he was greeting me:

'Let's say you are a Rasta now, Remi. That's how I would greet you:

"Greetings, my brother, in the name of Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. I thank the Lord for meeting you today, thank God to allow us to live another day and to cross path. I hail Selassie I for everything surrounding us, for this tree that protects from the sun, for this stall that supports the medicine, and for this very space where people meet, exchange, and connect as one. Bless it, my lord, for these plants, for the medicine, and for the life I live. Most importantly, I and I thank God for oneness, for life in its fullness, for life itself. Bless it, my lord." Then, he concluded while slightly bowing, "Jah! Rastafari!"

Naphtali marked a pause and pushed the role playing. 'Now it's your turn to greet. You say the same.'

'I say the exact same greeting?' I asked not sure to carry on a greeting with such ease.

'No, you see, my lord, you say what comes to your mind, what comes to your heart. Because the mouth says what the heart thinks.'

'So, you don't learn greetings or prayers?'

'No brother, you open your heart and just thank life in its fullness and praise God to be alive. That's how we greet. It comes naturally. It's what you have deep inside, what is in your heart.'

Throughout my research, I witnessed extensive and respectful Rasta greetings. During my Honours, I remember being in Belleville with Bradley – a Rastafari KhoeSan activist and central contribution to my previous work – who stopped at every stall to present respect and blessings to local Rastas. Similarly, Naphtali, Jo, Simon, and Gad, undertook profound greetings when other Rastas crossed their path. These cordial salutations underlined the spiritual character of my interlocutors who constantly connected and thanked Jah. The healers emphasized the permeating and omnipresent nature of the Divine within the different spheres of life. Moreover, the important respect displayed reinforced the idea of familial bonds between Rastas. '*All Rastas are family,*' stated Simon [63]. However, not only restricted to members of the movement, respect in greetings concerned any passers-by. I always felt highly esteemed when arriving or leaving the street corner. The Bush doctors always saluted and thanked me for visiting, for the time spent together, and the experiences shared.

[63] See pp. 71 – 72.

> *Remi seemed uncomfortable while greeting other Rastas. Visibly introverted, he would not fully open himself to deep and hearty greetings. Furthermore, the ease displayed by his interlocutors in the process seemed to intimidate him. He feared the moment of greeting back. What would the person think if he messed it up? Remi also questioned the very nature of his heart. How could he find and express what was in his heart? Did he not dig deep enough to carry on appropriate greetings? Did his struggle to connect, emphasized by the healers, prevent him to open his heart? Therefore, experiencing these greetings, although unsettling, directly contributed to Remi's personal development. He questioned himself throughout these moments, trying to connect, always.*

Naphtali's greeting example underlined the promotion of structuring connections and webs of relationships. Therefore, Rastas practices and beliefs appeared entangled with Indigenous knowledge. The healer considered the various worlds (animal, spiritual, and human) and underlined oneness and unity. Similarly, the promotion of deep and complex connections and interdependencies surfaced through the ritual and spiritual use of *Ganja*. The group of Bush doctors prayed before lighting up the chalice and punctuated the prayers by '*Jah Rastafari*'. That reasserted the spiritual nature underlying the act of smoking herbs. Smoking had ritual properties, enhanced spiritual connections, and contributed to liberating medicinal potentialities. It also challenged the Western conception of marijuana as a recreational drug.

> *'Ganja, my lord, is the universal medicine. It can heal everything. We smoke it to get closer to God. It permits to see the world through a different perspective, to elevate consciousness, to reach a different state of mind. It helps to meditate. That's why we smoke,' Jo informed me. He later added, 'Everything was made for a purpose. God created grass for cattle and that's why you have big cattle, even if they only eat grass. God created herbs for us, to heal. That's also why we have the Ganja.'*

Peter Tosh confirms the medicinal character of marijuana and the connections between the sacred plant and Bush doctors through his lyrics. In the song *Legalize it* (1976) he states, 'It's good for the flu/Good for asthma/Good for tuberculosis/Even umara composis.' Two years later he sings in Bush Doctor (1978), 'Dem legalize marijuana/Right here in Jamaica/Dem say it cure glaucoma/I man a de Bush Doctor.'

However, toward the end of my field, Jo did not '*puff Ganja*' anymore. He needed a fresh start and wanted to clean his body before eventually starting to smoke again. He believed having reached an elevated spiritual state of mind. The use of *Ganja* could not further enhance his connections with Jah and the ancestors. This challenged eventual prejudices and pre-established conceptions surrounding

Rastas as smoking ‘plenty ‘erb’ (Zips 2006: 265). Stemming from Alpha Blondy’s song God Bless Africa (2002), ‘t'es pas obligé de fumer ganja pour être un rasta’, which can be translated by ‘you do not have to smoke Ganja to be a Rasta.’

Overall, through the Rasta sense of belonging, the group of Bush doctors displayed a permeating spirituality. God surfaced everywhere, in every natural being, encompassing the entire web of life. Hand-checks, greetings, clothing, etc., further underlined this ubiquity. Through the promotion of structuring connections and webs of relationships, Rastafari embraced Indigenous knowledge and appeared as a platform to express plural, complex, and holistic worldviews. Therefore, the movement, which implied a total involvement, became particularly relevant for claimants of Indigenous identity. Smoking herbs, although not mandatory, enhanced the connections with God and ancestors and liberated medicinal properties. Its ritual aspect participated in overcoming prejudices and underlined the resistant nature of the movement that promoted an alternative framework of knowledge and possible ways to challenge Babylon. Overall, through their faith, beliefs, and practices, the Bush doctors were able to reconnect with relevant religious frontiers, in line with the context in which they lived. They continually composed, re-composed, and negotiated. Through Rastafari and the dynamic process of negotiation, they could bridge cultural and religious gaps when precolonial spiritualities failed. Thus, spiritualities and cosmologies were fluidly re-appropriated, constituting one identity marker or sense of belonging that nourished the overarching identity. Nevertheless, religious orientations did not represent the entire identity of my interlocutors. Therefore, although Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali did not worship ancestors’ deities, they could legitimately claim an Indigenous identity. Finally, Rastafari underlined communal bonds, shaping the feeling to belong to a united family. In that regard, lineages and ancestries appeared primordial. Thus, the re-appropriation and re-composition of complex genealogies and the multiplicity of potential interpretations are the focuses of the last part of that chapter.

3) *A multiplicity of interpretations through the re-appropriation of lineages*

Jo was wearing a red, gold, and green hoodie. On his chest was embroidered the Lion of Judah, encircled with the star of David. He decided to explain Haile Selassie I’s lineage. ‘Haile Selassie, my lord, the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, is Jah on Earth. He is Jah incarnation here. Jah is the short name for Jehovah, for God. Emperor Selassie is a descent of King David. King Solomon and Queen of Sheba were his forefathers. That’s why we talk about the House of Solomon. The Solomonic dynasty they say. Now you understand, my lord, it goes far, very far.’

Simon standing next to us jumped into the conversation.

'Ya, Remi boy, you see, we're here to show the light to those who want to see. I'm not gonna tell you to become a Rasta or anything like that. You are your own man and you make your own choice. I'm just showing the way, the path. I'm telling people "look, there is the light. If you wanna be enlightened follow it." Me, I stay true to myself and to God. I'm trying to live the right way, Remi boy. The same goes for my brother Jo!' he concluded hugging his associate.

Simon's contribution to the discussion underlined freedom of choice and potential orientations in Rastafari. Indeed, the movement is not proselyte and does not propose established and rigid teachings. Everyone can make his own choices. Stemming from this, Simon and Jo did not seek to convert their audience but rather to acknowledge and emphasize righteousness. Without rejecting others' spiritualities and worldviews, the Bush doctors proposed a path that had continuously fulfilled. Their offered potential alternatives.

Jo, presenting Selassie's ancestry, stressed the structuring re-composition of lineages in identity formation. Through the healers' worldviews, the connections with ancestries permitted to fulfil historical and cultural gaps. The Bush doctors could reconnect with potential heritages, histories, and communities. In that regard, Rastafari allowed to be part of a family and liberated a new sense of belonging that complemented the KhoeSan identity orientation. KhoeSan and Rastafari lineages enmeshed, both filling the voids of colonisation. Again, historical and mythical ancestries intertwined. In general, Rastas re-appropriated Biblical characters on their own terms, making Judeo-Christian heroes relevant within their specific framework of thought. For example, Jo identified with the ancient Israelites, people chosen by God in the Ancient Testament. Additionally, the Bush doctors considered the prophet Moses as a common ancestor. Globally, Rastafari emerged as a creole and syncretic movement[64]. Furthermore, the interdependent Rastafari and Indigenous lineages/ancestries presented by the group of Bush doctors implied a multi-layered conception of time. Past, present, and future enmeshed and interdepended. Jo's consideration of ancestors populating the street corner[65] exemplified the idea. Mutabaruka's words could conclude: 'I am my ancestor and my ancestor is I' (2006: 38).

Jo felt moved by the interdiction of physical contact experienced by a woman Sangoma in her

[64] See pp. 22.
[65] See pp. 45.

initiation process[66]*. After the two Xhosa women left, he stated the importance of connecting through the body. Then, he established a parallel with the Rasta mansions.*

'Do you know the different Rasta groups?' He asked. 'These ladies are like Bobos.' 'Simon is a Bobo Ashanti, right?' I asked.

'Yes, my lord. Simon is Bobo. Look here, Remi, Bobos, they don't touch, they are very respectful. For example, when they greet, they can join their hands and say: "Respect, my lord". They don't show their dread either. They always hide it and, maybe, when they are alone in the Mountain, they take the turban off and wash their hair in the waterfall. They connect with nature that way, feel the energy. They are very respectful you see. Gad was Bobo before being Sackman.'

'And you Jo what are you?' I continued.

'Me, I live in a Nyabinghi community. Nyabinghi are very spiritual. Now, let me tell you, there is no colour for Nyabinghi. We are all the same, equal. There is energy, power in everyone. Us, we touch to connect, to create bonds, exchange and share the energy. It's important to feel the power in others.'

Jo's representation of the Rasta groups eventually sparked a long philosophic diatribe from a client who just arrived. The passion and speech rate of the latter eventually stunned the audience.

The Mansions of Rastafari reasserted freedom of thought within the movement. Through the literature review, I grasped the various conceptions of the Holy Trinity. Some conceive Marcus Garvey as the Messiah, Robert Athlyi Rogers[67] as the Priest, and Haile Selassie I as the King. Others consider Marcus Garvey, Selassie, and 'I' as constitutive members of the Black Trinity. The Bobo Ashanti believe that Prince Emmanuel is the Priest of the Trinity and, therefore, the head of the group. The Twelves Tribes of Israel, for their part, see Gad as the leader. Besides Haile Selassie I, there is no head through Nyabinghi perspective. Mutabaruka explains that Rastafari 'has no set path' (2006: 27). Therefore, various philosophies and ways of life are shaped within the movement, among groups and individuals. In the field, Simon rejected the eventuality of women working herbs at the corner. He believed that menstruation affected the medicine, made it impure, and blocked the effectiveness of the plants. He also discouraged the presence of families in the working space[68]. Naphtali, on the other hand, enjoyed having his wife and baby daughter at the corner. Additionally, Gad and Jo acknowledged that women could work as Bush doctors even if it was rare; only a few worked herbs

[66] See pp. 114.
[67] Robert Athlyi Rogers wrote the *Holy Piby* (1924), an influential book in the development of Rastafari.
[68] See pp. 56.

in Cape Town. Although diverse worldviews rose in the field, unity prevailed. Simon concluded the discussion around families at the street corner interweaving his fingers together, '*at the end of the day, everyone is free to choose, my brother, but we stay together!*' That unity in diversity connected with KhoeSan communities that historically differed through local practices and beliefs but, today, unified through a common claim. Rastafari and Indigenous senses of belonging entangled through my interlocutors' perspectives.

To conclude the part, the group of Bush doctors displayed freedom of choice and understanding in their worldviews. They presented multiple potential conceptions and interpretations. Indeed, Rastafari is neither a rigid spiritual framework nor a proselyte enterprise. The movement provides a platform for diverse worldviews and proposes a possible path to righteousness, which the group of healers regularly intended to underline throughout the moments shared. Unity within diversity emerged. Furthermore, Rastafari joined the KhoeSan framework of thought in bridging cultural and religious gaps shaped through years of colonization and marginalization. The movement emerged as a platform for re-appropriation and re-composition and allowed for the reframing of spiritualities and cosmologies. Overall, Rastafari and Indigenous worldviews intertwined. These frameworks of thought and senses of belonging dynamically nurtured each other through the perspectives presented by Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali.

To conclude the chapter, Rastafari rose as an alternative path to violence and gangsterism that blighted the everyday life of the Cape Flats, the home of the group of healers. Challenging drug-consumption, gang affiliation, and violent culture, the Bush doctors continually sought righteousness and respected other alternative virtuous paths. My interlocutors regularly mobilized concepts such as One Love and 'I and I' to promote oneness, connections, and communal/familial bonds. Rastafari permitted to deconstruct racial prejudices, blurring arbitrary categorizations that KhoeSan and Coloured communities experienced. In line with the time, space, and context of the practitioners, the decolonial and resistant movement, which required a full commitment, contributed to fulfilling cultural, religious, and historical gaps implemented by years of colonisation. On the other hand, precolonial practices and beliefs failed to do so. Among the group of healers, processes of re-appropriation and re-adaptation occurred, reinforcing dynamism, fluidity, and incompleteness in the framework displayed. More than a spiritual system, the inclusive and encompassing movement proposed a platform for multiple holistic worldviews. Nevertheless, the inclusiveness promoted was, to some extent, tarnished by ambiguous gender relations, the 'patriarchal subordination of women' (Zips

2006: 86), and the profound disdain towards same-sex relationships.

The moments shared with the group of Bush doctors emphasized a structuring and permeating spiritual framework of thought. The herbalists continuously underlined and reasserted their connections with Jah, ancestors, nature, and the web of life. The omnipresent Supreme manifested in many ways. The healers re-interpreted God at their image, fulfilling their needs. The promotion of the enmeshed web of life and structuring connections bonded Rastafari and Indigenous worldviews together.

Finally, Rasta and KhoeSan lineages intertwined and complemented each other. Furthermore, Judeo-Christian elements were regularly re-appropriated. Historical and mythical times mingled; past, present, and future enmeshed. Throughout the research, connections with ancestries partly structured the process of identity negotiation. Rastafari, a syncretic and creole movement, opened a space for freedom of thought, adaptability, and dynamism. In that regard, the diverse Mansions of Rastafari stressed the potential independence of the practitioners. Rastafari and KhoeSan senses of belonging further connected through the idea of unity within diversity. As Glazier mentions, the 'conversion to Rastafari[anism] might best be seen as a process of identity development' (2006: 262). Indeed, Rastafari actively contributed to the re-appropriation and development of the Indigenous identity. KhoeSan and Rastafari senses of belonging nurtured each other.

The complex identity negotiation of Rasta Bush doctors, which reunited Rasta, Indigenous KhoeSan, and additional senses of belonging, became particularly meaningful through the work with herbs. Therefore, the Bush doctors' framework of knowledge, with a particular focus on the occupation of healer and herbalist, is the heart of the next two final chapters.

VII - Healing Nations, Introducing the Occupation.

> *I had not seen Simon for a while. He was in Eastern Cape the previous weeks, traveling for diverse reasons. In that regard, he mentioned gathering plants, visiting and connecting with his 'brothers', and starting a repenting process. Simon came back wearing the Sack.*
> *'How is it going Simon? Hoe gaan dit vandag?' I asked.*
> *'Remi boy! I am good, feeling fresh you know. I'm back to work now, healing people, healing nations. That makes you feel good, blessed!' he proudly claimed before recounting the story of his trip.*

Through various moments, the idea of '*healing nations*' rose. The chapter focuses on the Bush doctors as global healers who challenged distinctions and proposed an all-inclusive and

comprehensive dispense of medicine. The complex identity negotiation took on its full meaning through the framework of knowledge displayed and the occupation practiced. Working herbs emerged as a way to promote Indigenous knowledge and claim an identity. The organisation, setting up, and supply of the medicine are the upcoming points of argument.

1) *'Pure medicine, Indigenous medicine... Take a look at my table.'*

While joking with Jo, Gad was setting up his stall methodically. Everything seemed to fall into place. Then, he explained the organisation of the herb counter.
'You see brother, you can't throw all your medicine on the table randomly. That's not right. Medicine can't work that way. Some stuff don't match. They are not working well if put together.'
'Less effective?' I asked picking up the morning conversation.
'Herbs must go with herbs, roots with roots, bulbs with bulbs. There is an order, a knowledge to organise the table.' he concluded.

Another day, following the discussion on the Dassiepiss[69], Jo confirmed Gad's methodology. He reasserted almost verbatim:
'... Now, you see, my lord, I separate it [the Dassiepiss] from the other plants. There is a specific order. This medicine [the Dassiepiss] doesn't go well with other plants because it's for a specific purpose. Some types of medicine don't go together, or they lose power. Bulbs go with bulbs, stones with stones, herbs with herbs. There is a particular order. We don't put everything together and that's it. There is knowledge behind what we do.'

Working herbs started with the organisation of the stall. While from the outsider's perspective, plants seemed randomly thrown on makeshift counters, a closer understanding disclosed the methodical arrangement. The configuration reflected underlying knowledge and enhanced potentialities in medicine. The herbalists sought to maximize potency and effectiveness by matching the resources on their tables. '*Herbs must go with herbs, roots with roots, bulbs with bulbs.*' Besides the abundant White Sage, the popular Buchu, and the previously cited Dassiepiss, the Bush doctors proposed Khaki Bush, Rhino Bush, Red and White Onions, Wild Garlic, White Women Breast, Love Roots, Red Carrots, etc. Stones, ointments, bracelets and necklaces, cannabis oil, and occasionally honey could add up on the counters, which were not disorganised repositories of plants, objects, and other products indistinctly offered at the corner of streets but archives of underlying knowledge and

[69] See pp. 66.

alternative worldviews. Each element had its story[70] and *'specific purpose.'* The diversity of medicine and products proposed reflected a rich and complex body of knowledge and an encompassing apprehension of healing, which challenges the common subdivision/fragmentation within Western societies that seek specialization. Through the four Bush doctors' worldviews and by embracing their framework of thought, alternative understandings and interpretations of medicine emerged. Not hooked on the drug of modernity and capitalism that promotes productivity and profit, the contributors of that work emphasized quality over quantity, effectiveness over efficiency[71]. Their knowledge was not limited or fragmented into specific categories/specialties. Starting with the organisation and setting up of their tables, my interlocutors proposed inclusive and encompassing applications of healing strategies, which reflect potential connections between Indigenous worldviews. Indeed, many traditional healing systems[72] present total and holistic understandings of well-being[73]. For example, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) covers a large range of actions, conceiving the body's vital energy, *qi*, circulating through channels that interconnect the entire body. Furthermore, the holistic approach overcomes the human and promotes unity with nature. The practices and beliefs that structure TCM, rooted in stories and volumes such as the *Huangdi Neijing,* have developed through thousands of years. The deployment of concepts such as Yin–Yang and the Five phases mobilizes the spiritual and cosmologic (Jiuzhang & Lei 2009). To conclude, healing practices across Indigenous communities are permeating and suggest profound and complex knowledge, bore untold histories, and draw in the spiritual/cosmologic.

Besides displaying unseen/underlying knowledge, the organisation of the Bush doctors' stalls mobilized the visible. Indeed, clients' potential sights participated in the herbalists' success. Therefore, Simon complained when a motorbike parked in front of the counters. '*If one person parks here, then everyone will do the same. People need to see the medicine. You can't block the view you know. How do people come if they can't see what we have? People in their car, in the buses, or stopped at the robot, they look, my lord*[74].' Working herbs valued the disposition and presentation/visibility of the medicine. Seeing the resources influenced clients. The healing strategies dispensed at the street corner permeated the senses[75], starting with the sight. On the contrary, modern Western medicine proposes boxes of indistinct tablets annihilating potential connections with nature.

[70] See Naphtali's introductory quote mobilizing the African Potato (1); Jo's Dassiepiss story (66); the extensive narratives about Hoodia (97 – 98); or the Tiger's Eyes protective properties (32 – 33).
[71] I consider a nuance between these two terms. While efficiency seeks to maximize productivity, effectiveness focuses on the desired outcome.
[72] See Ayurveda holistic healing systems (115) or Traditional Chinese Medicine.
[73] See pp. 104 – 105, 112 – 113.
[74] See pp. 49 – 50.
[75] See pp. 99 – 100 and 115 – 117.

'Rastaman! I am looking for Garlic. Do you have some?' voiced an elder passing by the stalls. Jo answered sorry. 'I'll be honest with you elder all Cape Town is looking for Garlic right now.' Then, optimistic, he continued. 'Come next week, I will bless you with good Garlic.'

The following week, the desired Garlic stood out on Jo's counter. The healer blessed all his 'regulars' with it. Then, he explained the use of the medicine.
'You see, Remi, it is an antibiotic. It's good when you catch a cold. People these days, they get the flue easily, their body is weakened by the cold weather. They look for Garlic to be strong. You can put it in a soup and drink it or I can also make a mix for you.'

Later, Gad picked up the conversation. 'You see brother, it's the good season for Garlic. Plants depend on the season, so when the right season comes, we know that people need these plants [that are growing]. That's the way of God. Plants have a purpose. If they grow at a specific time, it's for a reason. Garlic grows mostly during the winter season and we know that it will be useful to treat the flue. We know what people need.'

The Bush doctors actively sought to fulfil and satisfy their clients. They took pride in reaching that endeavour. Indeed, in the above episodes, Jo blessed his customers with the desired Garlic. The other healers of the group also intended to answer customers' demands. They displayed knowledge and understanding of the clients' needs, hence the importance of connections, aspiring to feel the people around. Regarding Garlic, once the winter settled in, the herbalists knew that many were likely to feel sick and tired. Therefore, they prescribed effective medicine and appropriate plants. Not merely seeking profit, the group of healers built harmonious relationships with their clients. They sought effectiveness through the understanding and connections with patients. Nevertheless, the occupation was not a chaotic and random practice that matches each patient's specific demand but rather structured and organised. The fact that '*all Cape Town [was] looking for Garlic right now,*' implied the idea of a global trend in the healing strategies. A form of economy partially governed the occupation, with networks of trades forming. The entire city of Cape Town looked for Garlic, every healer in its possession proposed it.

On the herbalists' counters, some plants seemed more important than others. Simon highly considered the powerful Red Carrot. '*You can add it in every mix, [it] makes you strong. That one is very powerful. No Red Carrot, no medicine,*' he stated, justifying the fact that he did not set his stall that day. Therefore, the herbalist would go all the way to Eastern Cape to fetch the powerful root. Buchu and Sage, probably the most popular herbs, were deeply esteemed and central components of my

interlocutors' tables. '*Fresh Buchu my king, very good for you,*' I regularly heard. The Hoodia, less frequent on the stalls, was another potential source of pride. The plant, often related to San communities (Foster 2011; Wynberg 2005; 2009), strengthened the connections with Indigenous identity.

Finally, Gad hinted at the permeating spirituality of their framework of thought. Seasons and plants followed the '*way of God'*. The Supreme structured and controlled natural cycles. That interdependency between spiritual and natural worlds connects with Rastafari that promotes an omnipresent and permeating understanding of Jah. Moreover, specific purposes laid behind everyday occurrences, reinforcing structuring spirituality. '*That's the way of God. Plants have a purpose. If they grow at a specific time, it's for a reason,'* explained Gad. Therefore, connections between Indigenous knowledge around plants/environment and Rasta frameworks of thought surfaced through the medicinal practices and beliefs of the Bush doctors. Gad further underlined the importance of environmental knowledge in his worldview stating:

> *'I studied nature, the trees, the environment... It's important. You can know the season, the time of the year, the weather just by looking at the trees, the grass, or the stones. Sometimes a stone can be right here one day, let's say during summer. Then, at another period, it is not here anymore. How? Maybe the rain carried the stone away. The next summer, the stone will be back at the same place. If you can understand it, and open your eyes to see it, it means a lot. Nature speaks. You just need to listen, observe, and connect with it. It's important to open yourself and try to understand. The Bushmen in the desert, for example, they know these things better than anyone. That's how they survive where no one can.'*

Gad emphasized the perception of the unseen, underlying the complex connections and webs of relationships structuring the environment. He advocated for opening up understandings explaining '*if you can understand [nature and the connections within], and open your eyes to see it, it means a lot*.' He considered the worlds through their inextricable enmeshment. Thus, connecting with the herbalists' worldviews required processes of introspection. These enterprises can contribute to challenging and disconnecting from preconceptions that stem from Western logics, loaded with dualities, categories, and boundaries. In that regard, Gad, negotiating with Rasta and KhoeSan senses of belonging, presented a resistant, countercultural, and decolonial worldview. I defend that understanding the interdependencies of the various worlds and reconnecting with nature can have a tremendous impact on coping with environmental concerns. In a context in which extractive and instrumentalist ideologies are destructing the planet, the technocrats and industrialists must learn from alternative worldviews. We must learn from alternative worldviews.

Finally, the mobilization of 'Bushmen' strengthened Indigenous bonds and contributed to legitimizing the Indigenous identity. Gad reasserted the KhoeSan source of his knowledge and, therefore, that specific sense belonging. Again, KhoeSan and Rasta identity orientations intermeshed within the Bush doctors' occupation and worldviews. The group of healers used both senses of belonging dynamically in the formation of their identity. The negotiation surfaced in the justification and legitimization of their practices and beliefs. Simon further emphasized the relations with Bushman heritages through the prescription of Hoodia, a plant at the centre of a successful claim right undertook by San communities from 2000 to 2003. The properties of the herb, which permits to live in the desert without food and water for days, constituted knowledge transmitted for generations. After numerous mentions of the appetite suppressing 'Bushman's hat' in articles and papers (Foster 2011; Wynberg 2005; 2009), being finally introduced to the plant sparked my interest. So far, the cactus looking medicine had remained 'exotic' and disconnected from the reality of my experience with KhoeSan communities. Being in contact with the plant eventually permitted me to give credence to the literature that I gathered. Simon explained that he got the Hoodia from his brother backyard where '*he can grow any type of thing*.' Therefore, fetching plants in the mountain was not the only way to gather medicine. The various methods to supply the stalls constitute the following point of development.

To conclude the part, working herbs started with the organisation of the Bush doctors' stall. Plants varied in importance, effectiveness, and were methodically organised. Through their complex and permeating framework of knowledge and occupation, which enmeshed with other Indigenous worldviews, the healers promoted both the underlying and the obvious, the unseen and the visible. Pleasing clients and fulfilling their needs were central endeavours that the herbalists reached through connections and understanding of the patients. Potential trends and networks of trades partly structured the occupation, which was not a disorganised application of random knowledge. Furthermore, the healers promoted encompassing and permeating spiritual frameworks of thought. God directly contributed to the entangled connections within the environment. Finally, through their worldviews and the application of knowledge, the group of Bush doctors negotiated with both Rastafari and KhoeSan senses of belonging. Both identity orientations contributed to shaping the overarching belonging and surfaced through the work with herbs. The countercultural aspect of Rastafari and the omnipresence of the Supreme enmeshed with KhoeSan knowledge, practices, and beliefs. From the methodical organisation of the stall to the mobilization and displaying of knowledge, the Bush doctors reconnected with Indigenous roots. The different methods to gather plants on the Bush doctors' counters constitute the next part of the development.

2) *Gathering plants to reconnect with Indigenous roots*

> *Two Sackmen joined us at the corner with a bag full of White Sage. Naphtali greeted them, recited a prayer punctuated by 'Jah Rastafari', and engaged a joyful discussion in Afrikaans. After a few minutes, the newcomers dropped off the bag next to the herbalist's stall. Naphtali gave them a few hundred rands. Seeing my interest in the scene, he explained:*
> *'Look, Zeb was supposed to go fetch Sage today. It is past one now and he is nowhere to be found. We sort out each other whenever we are missing medicine. These guys, they were passing by and they proposed me fresh Sage they fetched this morning. It was a good opportunity. You see, my lord, God made that exchange possible. Without crossing path with these Rastas, it would have been different the whole day. It could have been a struggle. Now, I can work without thinking about getting Sage.'*

The exchange between the three Sackmen hinted at the complex webs of relationships that shaped the Bush doctor occupation. Indeed, trading plants, medicine, and goods were regular processes happening at various levels. Relations could be established and maintained with itinerant Sackmen, as the vignette presents, and with regular partners such as Zeb, who often fetched plants for the herbalists. Exchanges also occurred between Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali; each healer was able to use the others' medicine[76]. Finally, processes of trade and gift-giving took place with diverse people visiting the street corner. I witnessed an aged woman bringing stones[77], a professor giving books around plants, and even someone giving away small flags from different countries. These various forms of exchanges could be formal – involving money – or informal – '*[Zeb], we sort him out*.'

The following quote completes the one above, underlining the importance of solid webs of relationships with fellow healers, other Sackmen, or passers-by. Trust and honesty structured appropriate relations that influenced the present and potential future; the different layers of time conceived as interdependent.

> *'Remi, you need to connect with everyone. You always need to make contacts. You never know, some days, you might meet these people in another place, they will remember you and help you out.' Jo eventually explained. 'When you connect with everyone, they see that you're good, that you know people, that you're someone they can trust.'*

On a global scale, being aware and understanding the underlying interdependencies connecting the

[76] See pp. 56 – 57.
[77] See pp. 55.

multiple worlds can contribute to addressing and overcoming misunderstandings and misconceptions. Lessons can be learnt from the alternative framework of knowledge presented at the street corner. Embracing the relational ontology can participate in coping with the environmental, social, and human crises that we face today.

> *Jo wanted Remi to connect. He continuously encouraged him in that endeavour, stressing the importance of the webs of relationships. Remi listened carefully, exchanged with passers-by, tried to feel the inner potential within people and nature. He tried to connect through medicine, using all his senses. However, why was the lack of connections so obvious for his interlocutors? How did Jo perceive that need to connect in Remi? Maybe the herbalist possessed extra sensibility, felt the inner power within people, and Remi lacked that power shaped through connections. Even if he was aware of the life entanglements, Remi knew deep inside that he was failing to connect, that something limited his openness. Why was he failing? Why did that need to connect constantly re-surface? Was Remi not connecting at all during the time spent at the street corner? Was he completely disconnected from the surrounding worlds? And how could he develop and nurture these connections? That quest to connect emerged pivotal in Remi's personal development. He continuously sought awareness of the surroundings and tried to embrace a relational ontology by shaping and maintaining webs or relationships.*

Rastafari sense of belonging emerged through the trade between Naphtali and the two Sackmen. Again, God, omnipotent, contributed to the moment. He permitted the transaction. Furthermore, Naphtali voiced a spiritual greeting punctuated by '*Jah Rastafari*'. He further identified his interlocutors as Rastas. Although '*you have some KhoeSan who sell plants and do medicine but who are not Rasta,*' explained Jo one day, Rastafari was structuring in the occupation and worldviews of the group of Bush doctors.

Finally, while frequent trades occurred within the space occupied by the group, the herbalists promoted the collection of their own medicine. Simon explained that picking up plants himself '*[was] more blessed. The medicine [had] more power, stronger.'* Again, the Bush doctors pursued the maximization of potency and effectiveness. Simon further added that knowing where the medicine came from entailed more connections between him and the plants, mixes, and decoctions. He could be in synergy with the resources. Overall, the healers sought for a deep understanding and profound connections with the medicine. Therefore, undertaking herb treks in the surrounding areas, as well as long journeys in Eastern or Northern Cape, emerged as important projects within the occupation, enhancing these central bonds and relations.

Toward the turn of June, I was invited by Gad, Jo, and Rambo to hike in the Mountain. We left the street corner around 11, heading to Vredehoek, on the slope of Table Mountain. From there, we walked an hour and half to reach a small waterfall, a Rasta '*sacred place*'. '*We come here to find the blessing, my lord*,' mentioned Jo. It was around 2 pm when we started heading back to the bustle of the city with recharged and appeased spirits but without any plant picked up. Indeed, initially presented as an herb trek, the nature-walk eventually took a more complex turn. Three main aspects emerged from the experience shared: the hike as an Herb trek, as a spiritual Rastafari gathering, and as deeply connected with KhoeSan histories.

The walk as an Herb trek.

Throughout the walk and the time spent at the waterfall, Jo kept spotting and presenting the various medicine encountered. Although the final purpose of the hike was not about fetching plants, the centrality of medicine in my interlocutors' worldviews dynamically surfaced.

'You see, Remi, this is medicine. We are surrounded by medicine. You just have to know and observe,' Jo explained. 'But we can't take it here. The rangers, they are up there,' he said pointing at the mountain. 'They look with their binoculars. You can't take plants this side.'

'Let me see that one,' he said later, picking up a small section of a Buchu-looking bush. He smelled it. 'Hun, hun, that is fake Buchu. It doesn't smell as strong as the one we use.'

On the way down, Gad turned back with a malicious look. He went behind a dense tree. A few seconds later, he reappeared with a thick branch. Jo, who saw the entire action, came toward Gad.
'No, my brother, it's not good. You can't do that.' He inspected and smelled the branch. 'That is trouble, my lord.'
Therefore, he threw away the medicine in the bush. Gad did not complain. He probably knew that it was 'trouble'.

A few minutes later, Jo took off a green branch from a tree. 'That is good for the skin, for pimples.' He turned to Rambo. 'Come here!'
Rambo came closer and Jo applied the white and thick fluid coming out of the plant on his friend's left cheek. Then, we carried on the descent. Rambo seemed happy to treat his skin.

Medicine was central in my co-hikers' worldviews. Even if the occasion did not permit to pick up plants, bulbs, and roots, the healers who shared the experience with Rambo and me paid close attention to the potential therapeutic resources around us. Therefore, their framework of knowledge

and medicinal dispositions spread to moments not directly oriented toward their occupation. Working herbs was not a simple job but encompassed everyday occurrences. Understanding medicine and nature emerges as a real passion and a full-time occupation. The vocation implied a total commitment.

Furthermore, the omnipresent medicine surrounded us, reasserting the complex enmeshment of the web of life. Human and nature mingled and intricately connected. The Bush doctors, through their practices and beliefs, promoted these connections and highlighted the central place of the environment in their worldviews. Learning from this can eventually participate in challenging Western discourses and anthropocentric considerations. Jo and Gad focused on details and the overlooked. Therefore, the nature-walk experienced liberated possibilities to reconnect with Indigenous knowledge as a framework promoting nature, the complex and rich web of life, the seen, and the unseen. The two healers continually and dynamically shaped their knowledge, discussing, touching, smelling, trying, and connecting with plants. The Bush doctors exchanged, listened to each other, and, therefore, dynamically built wisdom throughout the journey.

Finally, the herbalists seemed to negotiate with the law. Jo mentioned the possibility of coming at night or dawn to avoid the Rangers' control. Furthermore, they used some plants during the walk and Gad tried to bring back a thick branch. Nevertheless, everyone present that day sought to respect the natural harmony. Negotiating with the law neither implied the control of the surrounding resources nor violent relations with natural elements. Eventually, a sacred fire was burnt during our time at the waterfall – the '*sacred place*' – a forbidden endeavour on the slope of Table Mountain. The time spent at the waterfall and the symbolic emanating constitute the focus of the following part.

> *Reaching a 'sacred place' for the Sabbath.*
>
> *Alongside another Rasta met on the way, we reached the waterfall, the 'sacred place'.*
> *'We come here to find the blessing, my lord,' stated Jo. 'You can feel Jah's power. Here, you can connect with nature, with the ancestors. Not long ago, that place would get packed with entire families coming. Now, not so much anymore. It became quiet.'*
>
> *A few minutes later, while stripping to start his 'purification', he stated:*
> *'The water from the waterfall is pure, my lord. You can clean yourself, wash your hands, your feet, your all body. You can also drink it. It cleans you from Babylon, from all the chemicals.'*
>
> *Once comfortably established, everyone standing in a circle, Gad reinforced the sacred character of the space.*
> *'The first time I wore the Sack, I came here. It is a place for initiation. You come here, you clean yourself in the waterfall, burn your clothes and all the things from Babylon. Most of us*

come here to wear the Sack for the first time. That is where we are from, the Mountain. We are people from the Earth, so it's the right place to start over, to get purified and seek for righteousness.'

During our time spent in the 'sacred place', a Rasta elder called Papy Congo joined us. He washed himself and his collection of stones several times. He continuously prayed. Gad explained his endeavour:
'Look, I told you, you can wash your stones in the waterfall. That water is pure and recharges the power of your stones. Go clean your bracelet, my brother,' he said apropos of the Tiger's Eyes bracelet that I got from him.

After his cleansing, Papy Congo started a sacred fire. Although the Rasta met on the way seemed concerned by the enterprise having been arrested by the police a few weeks before, Papy Congo cleared up any doubt.
'They can't arrest I and I because I and I is burning the Holy Fire, the fire from the ancients. They can't stop holiness; they are afraid of the ancients' power. I and I is not afraid of them. The ancestors are stronger [than the law, the authority]. Fire must burn.'
Therefore, Jo encouraged the Holy Fire. 'Ya, my lord, fire must burn.'

Once we reached the waterfall, we entered a spiritual space suitable for Rasta gatherings. Greetings and profound respect led the various exchanges taking place. The six of us (Jo, Gad, Rambo, the Rasta met on the way, Papy Congo, and me), standing in a large circle, prayed before smoking the multiple ritual chalices. The members of our ephemeral community continuously mobilized and experienced Jah through clothing, teachings, practices, as well as within the environment, plants, water, etc… Jo, the hair uncovered, loudly invocated the Supreme while cleaning himself in the waterfall. Papy Congo prayed and purified his mind and body around the Holy Fire, which he continuously fed with various medicine, connecting with ancestors. The Divine was omnipresent and permeating. Every member of the congregation mobilized 'I and I', promoting the complex webs of relationships and underlining connections. 'I and I' was in every natural being, stressing the inclusiveness and non-discriminatory orientation of Rastafari. In that regard, I was an integrative part of the community. '*I and I is also there [in France]. I and I is everywhere!*' stated Gad. Additionally, the notion of Sabbath raised by the Rasta hiking with our group underlined the spiritual and syncretic nature of the movement. Indeed, Rastafari is a way of life that reinterprets and re-appropriates Judeo-Christian concepts, practices, and beliefs.

Reminding the African American proverb 'Each one teach one', teachings were indiscriminately provided:

'You cannot leave the circle while the blessing is open!' explained one member of the gathering to Rambo trying seat. 'You must stay, my lord, at least until we're done.'

Papy Congo also reprimanded Jo who turned his back to the fire.
'It's true what the elder said,' later stated the Bush doctor. 'I and I can't disrespect the Holy Fire. I and I can't leave or turn the back while fire burns. That is the ancients' fire. People used to sit around in a circle; you can't break that circle. You must respect the ancients.'

Overall, teachings concerned everyone; knowledge was dynamically shaped and re-shaped. That reminds the healers' constant process of learning[78]. In that regard, Rastafari is a continual quest for wisdom and righteousness (Zips 2006), with knowledge never complete. Generally, my interlocutors embraced this perpetual process of formation and showed humility and propensity toward self-reflexivity. Through the moment shared, no one was lectured. Openness and acceptance of the teachings prevailed.

Furthermore, the experience shared mobilized the healing imaginary. Although besides Jo and Gad the others did not claim to be Cape Bush doctors, healing properties of Rastafari surfaced. Reconnection with Jah, ancestors, nature, and the entire web of life participated in addressing various life-ailments. Furthermore, my interlocutors considered the waterfall with cleaning virtues; the purity of water carried medicinal attributes. The stream permitted to treat from chemicals, Babylon, and the destructive worldviews attached to the dominant system. '*Life is tough down there, so I and I come here often. For the Sabbath, I and I come and stay until the sun goes down.*' explained one member of our congregation. Spiritual cleansing and connections with the entire web of life permitted to recharge spirits and liberate minds from everyday life pressure, challenging the overarching framework of thought. In our society, these processes of healing and purification can contribute to attaining more peaceful and appeased sets of minds. They can enhance a reconsideration of our well-being, with a focus on more harmonious relationships with the self, others, and the surroundings. Overall, a comprehensive and encompassing conception of medicine rose. The community formed that day did not conceive healing practices directly connected to medicine and the treatment of symptoms but to spiritual cleansing, nature, and the web of life in general. That reminds the African apprehension of medicine. Asonzeh Ukah, retrieving from the Yoruba concept of Alafia, explains that the well-being of a person is total and considers the physical, social, economic, mental, and spiritual (Ukah 2016). Throughout the journey, Rastafari as a healing enterprise permeating the totality of the self and the relationships structuring the various worlds emerged.

[78] See pp. 52, 69 – 72, and 120 – 122.

Remi felt like an integrative member of the community. As a part of the circle, he listened to the various teachings and followed the principles voiced by his interlocutors. He cleaned himself and his bracelet in the waterfall, smoked the ritual chalices, and prayed alongside his fellows. He felt happy and in synergy with the group. His presence did not disturb or alter his interlocutors' practices as he was not the centre of interest. He was another indistinct member of the community, a part of 'I and I'. Therefore, he reconsidered his position and felt humbled by the experience. Although he struggled with greetings and dreaded the various chalices passing around, he tried to connect and fully open himself to the moment, the frameworks of knowledge shared, and the worldviews presented. Toward the end of the day, he was renamed Asher, in relation to his birth-month: December[79]*. Although the only white foreigner of the gathering, his interlocutors considered him a Rasta from France and accepted him. Still, he knew that he had a long way to go to grasp the relational ontology in its fullness. However, he felt blessed to share this moment with fellows, with friends. Remi would remember that day.*

Overall, the spiritual gathering promoted oneness and inclusiveness. Although people came from different backgrounds, countries, and origins, everyone unified as Rastas. Glazier (2006) explains that the movement does not require its adherents to break ties with other senses of belonging, leaving possibilities to negotiate with multiple religions and identities. Therefore, the last aspect of the walk broached the KhoeSan heritages felt throughout the experience, as well as the intertwined and multiple senses of belonging.

The KhoeSan histories surrounding us.

'Look at this place,' Gad told me while reaching a glade. 'The KhoeSan people, our people, they were living here. It was maybe in the fourteenth century. They were living all around, but there was no road and building like today, only the bush. Then, people from everywhere, from different countries - maybe some came from Europe, some from Africa, some from very far, my brother – they took the land and made our people prisoners. Here, in this place, we were tortured. It's an important space for us. You can feel [that] the spirits are strong here. It's part of our history. It's very important for us, my brother.'

Besides Indigenous medicinal knowledge and Rastafari sense of belonging, another identity layer arose from the hike. Indeed, Jo and Gad stressed the emergence of their KhoeSan heritages. Overall, the experience permitted to connect with nature and healing strategies, with 'I and I' and Jah, and with the ancestors' land and KhoeSan histories and heritages. Gad re-composed and re-

[79] According to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

appropriated the KhoeSan narratives according to his personal interpretation. Although Jan Van Riebeeck, one of the prime instigators of the colonisation of the Cape, arrived in 1652, Gad mentioned the fourteenth century. Therefore, he potentially alluded to difficult encounters with Xhosa or Zulu people. Maybe, he referred to the Portuguese's arrival, however, Klaasen describes KhoeSan communities as 'the first South Africans to experience the brutality of colonial oppression by the Portuguese under the leadership of Bartholomew Diaz in 1488' (Klaasen 2018: 7), in the fifteenth century. Alternatively, the supposed anachronism could represent a historical inaccuracy that stemmed from historical gaps that Gad and his peers experienced, if not simply reporting the healer messing with me. Overall, this episode underlined the constant and dynamic process of re-interpretation and re-appropriation that shaped their knowledge production and identity negotiation. This alternative conception of history reminds Stephen Hawking who states that 'the past, like the future, is indefinite and exists only as a spectrum of possibilities.' Gad re-appropriated the past, re-composed according to his knowledge, and drew from his spectrum of possibilities.

Furthermore, the space we entered mobilized an important set of emotions. Gad was touched and humbled to navigate a site loaded with the ancestor's energy and memories. '*It's very important for us […]*' he stated. Jo, quietly listening, seemed also moved by the nature of the site. The mobilization of ancestors and the emotionality that surfaced reminds Tsing (2017) and her focus on unseen ghosts of the landscapes. Indeed, the author identifies these ghosts as traces of extinction and invisible memories of haunted lives sheltered by the environment. Gad contributed to unveil the potential ghosts of the space we entered, making us aware of underlying connections and untold histories.

Finally, the multi-layered reconnections with Indigenous roots surfaced from the experience. Jo and Gad fully embraced their healing occupation, re-composed their spiritual worldviews through Rastafari, and re-appropriated KhoeSan histories and ancestries. They dynamically shaped and negotiated their identity. Rasta and KhoeSan senses of belonging mingled within the Bush doctors' identity. Medicinal practices and beliefs completed the picture. Far from being exclusive, these identity markers nourished each other. The connections with nature and the Supreme implied the establishment of relationships with the ancestors' land and the re-composition of narratives. Rastafari contributed to re-appropriate Indigenous roots, practices, and beliefs. Not a process that tamed or undermined the Indigenous identity, the negotiation experienced by the group of Bush doctors emerged as a process that helped to shape, fully embrace, and re-appropriate the belonging. Negotiating is, therefore, characteristic of processes of identity formation in general, underlining inherent dynamism, constant re-composition, and re-appropriation. Rasta and KhoeSan senses of belonging, not distinctly gathered, emerged closely connected and interdependent under a unique framework of knowledge, the framework of knowledge of the Bush doctors who shared moments of

their lives with me.

> *Hurray! Remi understood something. Although he knew the multiple senses of belonging and the negotiation process of identity formation, he had not yet grasped his own embedment in the constant decomposition, re-composition, and re-appropriation of who he was and who he dynamically became. Some senses of belonging rose more important than others, according to time, space, and context. Therefore, his Italian lineage triggered him more and more, maybe due to the poor health of his grandmother. He now wanted to plunge deeper into that identity orientation, embracing his Italian heritage, reframing who he was through that perspective. In contact with the Bush doctors, Remi understood that negotiating an identity was not about a legitimate and established belonging but rather about self-interpretation and self-conception. He was now shaping his identity in line with whom he associated with, with a community that he understood, and with a group that accepted him. He was shaping his identity through connections and feelings. Remi was negotiating his identity. He was aware of the process.*

The group of Bush doctors with whom I exchanged undertook distant and long journeys. Therefore, Simon spent a few days in Northern Cape to find diamonds. Once he returned, he proudly placed on his stall the stones collected. Additionally, he visited Eastern Cape for various endeavours[80], including the gathering of medicine. The herbalist, accompanied by Gad, also travelled to Knysna, stopping at Mossel Bay and George along the way. Taking with them Buchu and Love Roots to sell to local Rastas, they eventually came back with various medicine such as Red Carrots, African Potatoes, and numerous barks, roots, leaves, etc. Once back at the corner, they promoted those resources. The widespread and diversified nature and origin of the plants proposed emerged as a source of pride, further legitimized their practices, and highlighted the large and encompassing framework of knowledge they dynamically produced.

Gad and Simon shaped and nurtured solid webs of relationships through the Garden Route trip. Connecting with other Bush doctors was central to the success of their journey and, more broadly, to the occupation. During their travel, they became itinerant herbalists selling plants to local 'colleagues', similarly to the two Sackmen who exchanged with Naphtali[81]. Pre-established contacts and connections with healers in Mossel Bay, George, and Knysna facilitated their endeavour. They eventually provided sparse medicine in these specific areas, as well as spread and shared their knowledge across the territory. Indeed, Buchu and Love Roots are common around Cape Town and

[80] See pp. 93 – 94 and 96.
[81] See pp. 99.

less frequent in other locations. Therefore, they could participate in saving and promoting alternative knowledge around plants through travels and processes of transmission/exchange. These trade networks of medicine, knowledge, and worldviews remind healing strategies in Pakistan where 'quantities of plants [are] exchanged locally or exported' in 'local market systems named "Pansara"' (Rashid et al. 2018).

Additionally, the webs of relationships among Indigenous healers overcome national boundaries. I was able to observe international networks of exchanges during the all-Nama festival in Keetmanshoop. Herbalists from South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana displayed their practices and beliefs, shared their mutual knowledge, and wove relations. This underlines the inadequacy of African States delimitations inherited after independence but retrieving from Western colonial logic. These delimitations have rarely considered people's mobility, connections, and exchanges, and have led to the rise of territorial tensions and exclusive identities.

Gad and Simon were also able to weave familial bonds thanks to their Rastafari sense of belonging. During their journey, besides selling plants and connecting through medicine, they benefited free access to the Dancehall[82]. '*They must let us in, boss, we're coming from far and we are family!*' claimed Simon emphasizing the communal aspect of Rastafari.

Finally, the complex and intertwined identity negotiation surfaced throughout the presentation of the journey. Simon and Gad worked herbs, connecting with other Rastas and displaying their Indigenous KhoeSan framework of knowledge. They emphasized their embedded and interdependent senses of belonging. The mobile and dynamic Indigenous framework permeated and spread across locations. Once back at the street corner, Gad mentioned that they sold plants to other Rastas. '*These Rastas [were] KhoeSan too, even that side,*' he added. Therefore, the KhoeSan roots, not confined to Cape Town, extended to other areas. Again, my interlocutors negotiated with Indigenous and Rastafari belongings. Their occupation enmeshed with their identity negotiation.

To conclude the part, various processes of gathering medicine permitted to supply the Bush doctors' stalls. Possibilities of trades took place at different levels, underlining elaborate and complex webs of relationships. Furthermore, the healers that contributed to the work promoted the collection of their own medicine, seeking potency and blessing. The enterprise also enhanced deeper connections between the healer and the resources. The herbalists undertook herb treks as well as longer journeys to fulfil that project. These experiences, which eventually reinforced the permeating character of

[82] Clubs playing Reggae dancehall music. My interlocutors often mentioned going to the Dancehall.

healing strategies in everyday life, contributed to shaping and maintaining their framework of knowledge dynamic and alive. Gathering medicine converged with the process of identity negotiation. Rastafari and KhoeSan senses of belonging constantly interacted through the various processes that aimed at garnishing the Bush doctors' counters. Multiple layers of relationships structured the worldviews displayed, which promoted the connections with others, with nature, with ancestors, with Jah, and with complex and re-composed histories. Thus, gathering plants emerged as a potential way to reconnect with Indigenous roots and to contribute to the re-shaping and re-appropriation of a dynamic and fluid identity composed of multiple and interdependent senses of belonging. Overall, the multi-layered connections and the process of identity negotiation emerged as an integrative part of the occupation.

To conclude the chapter, the enterprise of healing nations contributed to the Bush doctors' reconnection with their Indigenous roots. Through the process, the complex identity negotiation took on its full meaning. Working herbs started with the methodical organisation of the healers' stalls that stressed both the visible and the invisible. The group of Bush doctors proposed a wide range of plants and items, eventually changing, and adapted to the clients' demands. In that regard, responding and understanding customers' needs attested to the herbalists' success. Structured by potential trends and networks of exchange, the occupation promoted the shaping of solid and intertwined webs of relationships. Herbal medicine, seasonal cycles, environmental wisdom, and the permeating place of the spiritual nourished the framework of knowledge displayed – which promoted the web of life – and supported the identity claim: an identity composed by multiple potential senses of belonging.

The Bush doctors gathered medicine through different processes completing each other. First, spontaneous trades and formal economic exchanges took place. Furthermore, my interlocutors promoted the potentialities of fetching plants themselves. Herb treks and longer journeys contributed to deepening the interdependencies between the healers and the plants and offered a medicine blessed with more potency. Various connections emerged, unveiling the complex webs of relationships woven and contributing to the reconnection with Indigenous roots. Relations with others, nature, ancestors, God, and with forgotten histories governed my interlocutors' worldviews. Healing emerged as a permeating occupation that shaped everyday life. Indeed, the Bush doctors' vocation influenced and reflected the identity negotiation. Working herbs permitted to reconnect with the Indigenous identity, re-compose histories and lineages, and re-appropriate spiritualities. The process of healing was total, permeating, and participated in the shaping and claiming of a complex and multiple identity. Completing that previous chapter that focused on the organisation, setting up, and procurement of the

medicine, the following one informs the concrete practice of healing and the process of knowledge formation as presented by those who contributed to that work.

VIII - I Man a de Bush Doctor

1) A holist way of conceiving medicine

A Monday afternoon, a woman came at the corner. She had that playful look, looking for something peculiar. Rummaging through the various medicine, she finally asked what she had in mind.

'Rasta, can you help me? With anything?'

'Anything sista!' Jo answered. 'What do you need?'

'Look, I want my boyfriend to marry me.' she said smiling, visibly amused by her own demand. She continued. 'That man, I don't want him to play around with other girls. I don't even want him to notice other girls in the street. When he walks, he must only see me. Do you have something for that?'

Zeb, who was sitting on a crate, quickly responded.

'Love Roots!' he exclaimed.

Jo continued. 'You need Love Roots sista. Zeb is right. With that medicine, your man will be mad in love. Love Roots strengthen the love bonds. Very powerful but you must be careful. You can't give it to everyone, or you will have problems!'

'Love Roots… very strong.' mumbled Zeb in the background.

'Look, come again tomorrow and I'll bring you some. You'll see, it smells very good. You can cook it or mix it in a drink. If I grate some and put it on his lips, eyebrows, and forehead,' he said using me as an example, 'I don't lie to you sista, girls will come running. It strengthens the connections, the love bonds.' he concluded.

'Mmmh, Ok,' she answered with a challenging but visibly happy tone. 'It better works Rasta. I know where you are! If that man doesn't marry me, I will come again! He better marries me quick quick! I am not waiting.'

Another exchange with Simon displayed the permeating and encompassing aspect of the healing strategies proposed at the corner. The 'lucky charm' realized by Gad earlier[83] *motivated my question.*

'Tell me, Simon, can you heal anything with your medicine?'

'Anything, my lord. Any problem you have, I heal!' he said with a hint of arrogance.

[83] See pp. 48 – 49.

'So, you also do mixes for luck, for positivity, etc.?'

'Anything, Remi boy. Healing nations by any means.' he reasserted.

Through the moments shared, the group of Bush doctors portrayed and applied permeating healing strategies that encompassed a wide scope of actions. Aware of the range of their occupation, the herbalists sought to satisfy demanding clients coming at the corner for diverse reasons. Professor Ukah (2016) emphasizes the holistic interpretation of African healing. Furthermore, the Waljen aborigin[84] Dr. Tamara Mackean supports the idea. Through an Indigenous worldview, she considers health as 'much more than simply getting sick. It's about getting a balance between physical, mental, emotional, cultural, and spiritual health. Health and healing are interwoven, which means that one can't be separated from the other.' The holistic conception challenges the global Western fragmentation and specialization of healing strategies. Thus, considering healing and health through a relational ontology – or through the understanding of the interdependencies and connections that govern our worlds – can participate in liberating new potentialities of apprehending and practicing medicine, as well as alternative conceptions of science. The burning mixes that Jo and Gad prepared to attract clients, bless a moment, and bring positivity[85], as well as the woman who sought to get pregnant[86], the herb trek/hike[87], and the richness of plants and products proposed[88] were other displays of pervasive/holistic interpretations and applications of healing strategies. The framework of thought bore, shared, and applied by the group of healers was not bounded by the direct treatment of symptoms but rather encompassed the complex relations with the self, others, God, the ancestors, and the surroundings. Their medicinal knowledge considered the enmeshment of the worlds, the interdependency between body and mind, and a total and permeating well-being. In that regard, physical, social, economic, spiritual, cultural, and political factors participated in one's well-being.

Furthermore, the healers, proud of healing nations without distinction, dealt with their own well-being in the process. Indeed, they could cure themselves as much as the patients. In that regard, Jo felt blessed being able to heal. By respecting that blessing he and his fellows connected with their roots and senses of belonging, with a culture, histories, and a framework of knowledge. In the process, they challenged 'modern' conceptions of medicine that focus principally on the treatment of symptoms and promote the use of chemicals. Through their practices and beliefs, the group of Bush doctors embraced alternative life trajectories, rejecting the ones that many of their acquaintances followed.

[84] The Waljen are a group of Indigenous people situated in Western Australia.
[85] See pp. 48 – 49.
[86] See pp. 55.
[87] See pp. 101 – 107.
[88] See pp. 95 and 108.

By working herbs, Jo also moved on from his difficult and emotional past[89]. Therefore, the formation and application of knowledge around plants, which contributed to multiple well-being, participated in the process of identity negotiation. Drawing parallels, 'in all Peruvian ethnic groups, plant knowledge is invaluable because it reinforces national identity and values, which are being lost in the complementary processes of modernization and globalization' (Bussmann 2013). Stemming from this, considering one's occupation as an integrative part of the process of identity formation and understanding its potential influence on general well-being can enhance working conditions and, therefore, participate in a deeper fulfilment. It can be pivotal for many who struggle to balance profession and private life. Additionally, the perspective contributes to challenging global worldviews and discourses on modernity that have failed us. Overall, the enterprise of healing nations participated in healing the herbalists' situations, the colonial wounds, as well as the clients' ailments and concerns. It enmeshed and interdepended with the process of identity negotiation.

'I'll sort you out, no stress, Remi boy!' exclaimed Simon. 'You said you wanted something for detox?' he continued, replying to my inquiry about the mix I asked the day before.

'Yeah, detox, energy. I feel tired these days.' I mentioned.

'Ok, boss. Look now, I have some Hoodia, some Red Carrots, of course. That makes you strong, strong medicine! For you, I have some Wild Ginger. It is good for the flu, the breathing, and it helps people with asthma. I can put some Kaneelbol for the stomach. It cleans the digestive system. Bitterbos, that one, helps you with fever. You won't get sick. And I add some Eucalyptus.' he said, describing the different components that he grated, cut, and mixed in a newspaper. 'Look, I put some more Red Carrots for you because you are my brother Remi boy,' he continued while adding a few other roots without mentioning their name.

'Now, you boil a full kettle: 1.8 litres. You pour the water on half of the mix and keep the other half for later. You leave it for 2 hours. Then, you drain it. Me, what I do, first thing in the morning, I drink one full glass, then a glass of water. I drink another glass before lunch and another before supper. After that, you'll feel strong, boss, body and mind. And watch out down there!' Simon showed his groin area. 'That gives you strength so, don't be playing with your little one all day...' he said while raising his forearm straight and firm. The herbalist laughed and continued. 'The other half of the mix, you keep it until you finish the bottle. You keep it on the open, not closed in the paper, or it's gonna rot. It might dry, but it's fine. It works even if it's dry. No worry, Remi boy.'

[89] See pp. 76.

'So, that should give me some energy?' I asked.

'That will make you strong. It's detox for your body and your mind. It permits to release the pressure and clean from Babylon, the chemicals, and all the things that we ingest. It boosts the immune system. You'll feel liberated inside, you know, strong! Let me know how it goes.' I thank him, and we carried on the discussion on another subject.

For two weeks, three times per day, I used the medicine prepared by Simon. The beverage tasted quite bitter, stayed in the mouth, and dried the throat. Although I did not need medicine, being already in good shape, the mix gave a fresh feeling. I did not suffer any particular slump or energy decline during the time I used it. I even felt well-focused (in my work and the sport I practice). Nevertheless, my condition did not spectacularly increase either. The medicine was not a miracle potion and not advertised as one by Simon. However, the herbalist touted a rise of libido that I did not experience. Overall, the mix contributed to maintaining my well-being and reinforced confidence in my global condition. It was a positive experience that I undertook again approaching the winter season. Furthermore, I intend to continue seeking for mixes to face important life events. Additionally, my father, following my advice, tried a preparation made by Gad. Running marathons and focusing his training sessions on the measurement of his heart rhythm in relation to time, he noticed a concrete improvement in every domain. He appeared delighted by the experience. After I gave Gad feedbacks from my father, the healer seemed proud of his success and mentioned his pleasure to meet him. '*I know you're my brother, Remi, [by] bringing family to us.*'

Remi, sitting on a crate next to Simon, was attentively listening to the names and properties of the different plants. He wanted to show his interlocutor that he esteemed and could absorb the shared knowledge. In reality, he struggled mightily. He could not understand and remember the specificities of each medicine. He needed to ask repeatedly and listen religiously. He needed to touch, smell, and taste the medicine. He needed to connect. It was a big challenge to embrace, shape, and produce an alternative herbal knowledge for Remi, who was not familiar with the framework displayed. Ultimately, knowing the names, the use, and being able to introduce the plants to other people who visited the street corner emerged as a great source of pride. It asserted his potential to develop alternative knowledge and new skills. It deepened his connections with nature. Gradually, slowly, and partially, Remi was connecting.

The encompassing and permeating nature of my interlocutors' healing practices and beliefs surfaced through Simon's explanation of the benefits of the medicine. '*It's detox for your body and your mind*.' Thus, my well-being involved the totality of my person. Moreover, the herbalist prepared a mix that cleaned from chemicals and Babylon, promoting alternative knowledge and healing strategies over

mainstream worldviews. In that regard, people looking for alternative healing strategies tend to challenge Babylon and seek to release accumulated stress. Therefore, the healers often prepared mixes helping in those projects. Simon perceived and intended to address my needs through his preparation. Likewise, the emphasis on the libido increase could be linked with my position. The herbalist was probably aware that many male students in their twenties value their sexual aptitudes. Therefore, he emphasized this specific property in the medicine proposed. The treatment of symptoms, although apprehended, was not the principal focus. Once more, it demarcated from Western conceptions of healing. As Simon's prescription exemplified, the group of Bush doctors who connected with me proposed healing strategies that dealt with a wide range of actions and permeated life in its totality.

Before establishing a parallel with the Rasta mansions[90], Jo seemed disturbed by the prohibition of physical contacts undergone by a woman Sangoma in her initiation phase. Aiming to check the hand of the Xhosa woman, he was denied the right to connect through the body.

'What about the baby?' he asked relatively straightforward. 'Do you touch the baby?' Seeing the confusion on his interlocutor's face, he continued. 'In our culture, sista, the baby needs human contacts to grow. He needs to be touched and loved through hugs, kisses, cuddles. The baby needs affection, connections with elders, or he can't grow and become a righteous man. Affection passes through the whole community.'

The other woman accompanying the future Sangoma reassured Jo, promising him that next time they would shake hands, that the prohibition would be lifted after the initiation phase, and that the taboo around physical contacts was only temporary. Nevertheless, after the two women left, Jo remained puzzled.

'Without touching, how can you transmit the energy?' he deplored. 'In our culture, the KhoeSan culture, people need to connect, be together, and share their energy by connecting with everyone. Look here, I don't believe you can understand medicine if you isolate yourself. You don't allow your power and your abilities to liberate if you are isolated, if you refuse to connect, or if you deny contacts. You see, it's very different than us, but they are healers too. We must respect.'

Jo's focus on physical contacts stressed 'encorporated' knowledge. He understood children's growth and upbringing through body contacts and relations. Again, he participated in the promotion of a structuring relational ontology. The body emerged as a connected entity, shaped through and shaping

[90] See pp. 91.

connections. Touching, tasting, smelling, watching, and feeling permitted to share energy, absorb, and transmit knowledge. The group of healers, throughout different moments, mobilized all the senses in their understanding and application of the medicine[91]. Today, healing strategies that tend in that direction are re-emerging. For example, in Ayurveda holistic healing systems, sensory impressions are central to healing processes. These systems developed in India imply the total implication of the body. The following vignette further emphasised the mobilization of senses in the Bush doctors' conception of medicine.

> *One day, a couple came looking for White Sage.*
> *'Is it fresh?' the man asked while taking the plant desired.*
> *'Feel it!' quickly answered Naphtali.*
> *'No! You have to smell it not to feel it!' the client exclaimed. He turned to Jo. 'You must teach your brother, Jah Man.'*
> *'Look, my lord,' calmly replied Naphtali. 'It is not only the smell. You must feel, touch, look, taste. Understanding herbs takes many ways.'*
> *Jo, watching from a back seat, silently acquiesced.*
>
> > *Remi approached Naphtali's counter once the couple left. Trying to cement knowledge, he asked questions about the various plants, their names, and their properties. He touched, smelt, and felt the resources. He tried to develop senses that he did not use regularly. Mobilizing the body in its entirety was new but helped him to understand and remember. The Bush doctor, sharing knowledge, encouraged Remi's endeavour. 'Good, my Lord, you must feel the medicine and connect with it.' Remi was continually learning.*

For the group of herbalists, liberating their abilities and feeling the energy passed through multiple bonds. Body contacts, oral transmissions, and spiritual connections enhanced these projects. Jo continuously connected with passers-by. He often mentioned the positive power felt in people. The herbalist seemed to know when other healers, doctors, or spiritual men passed by the corner, whatever backgrounds and sources of knowledge. Those 'powerful' individuals often confirmed the herbalist's point of view, stating the substantial energy felt when entering the space. According to Jo, exchanging with them was pivotal. '*You don't want to keep everything for yourself, Remi, that's not good. You wanna share, my lord*.' Again, Jo promoted the relational ontology at the foundation of his worldview.

> *Remi was captivated by Jo exchanging with a white healer wearing a shirt representing Dhanvantari, the Hindu god of medicine. The idea of an emanating power within people*

[91] The sight (pp. 49 – 50, 72, and 96), smell (pp. 71 – 72, 101 – 102, 111, 115, 121), taste (pp. 121), touch (pp. 116, 121), etc…

fascinated the student, who inconspicuously tried to feel some energy within the two medicine men. He wondered about his own vitality but did not dare to ask Jo once the Hindu healer left the stall. However, many times, the group of herbalists expressed their esteem of Remi's will to learn, of his openness to understanding their knowledge framework, and of his spiritual disposition. Therefore, he gradually became more confident in what he could give of and in his own power. As people passed-by, Remi continued trying to feel their inner potential. However, to reach that endeavour, he needed to connect deeper. He was not even close.

Finally, a misunderstanding emerged from the episode with the Sangoma, in which two worldviews confronted each other. Jo could not understand the future Xhosa healer's practices. He seemed upset with her unwillingness to link through the body. However, Sangomas must respect the principles and precepts of their specific ancestors. Xhosa healers deeply connect with their *Dlozi,* ancestors that enter the body during dreams. Therefore, each healer must comply with particular rules. Although the beliefs and practices of Sangomas and Bush doctors seem different, they share similarities. The connections with ancestors and the manifestation of their 'blessing' through dreams can potentially bond the practitioners together. Finally, as Jo stated, '*it's very different than us, but they are healers too. We must respect.'*

Overall, the part underlined the permeating and encompassing nature of working herbs. The group of healers, through diverse holistic conceptions and applications of healing strategies, proposed simultaneously to treat symptoms and to fix the physical, social, economic, and cultural relationships of patients who come for various reasons and seek for different treatments. Moreover, Simon, Jo, Naphtali, and Gad healed themselves in the process. Indeed, fulfilling a 'blessing' and 'destiny', they overcame the colonial wounds, re-appropriated histories, framework of knowledge, and identity, which directly contributed to their own well-being. Additionally, their herbal knowledge, practices, and beliefs mobilized the entire body and senses. Through the moments shared, a relational ontology emerged and structured the foundations of my interlocutors' worldviews. The need to connect on multiple levels dynamically surfaced. Their understanding and application of medicine encompassed a global African conception of healing strategies, reminding their pan-African Rastafari sense of belonging. Finally, connections also emerged with other Indigenous healing strategies. In that regard, the last part of the work seeks to underline the diverse origins of the knowledge displayed. Indeed, multiple heritages enriched the healing strategies of the group of Bush doctors.

2) *A dynamic knowledge and identity formation*

Processes of knowledge production and identity negotiation are interdependent, interacting, and nourishing each other[92]. The formation, appropriation, and transmission of knowledge contribute to shaping, defining, claiming, and asserting an identity. Vice-versa, the identity negotiation influences the framework of thought built and embraced, and the sources and heritages that dynamically shape it. At the theoretical foundations of those entangled processes are the notions of unfinishedness, fluidity, and dynamism. In that regard, incompleteness as a normal way of being must be celebrated and permits to participate in the decolonial discussion (Nyamnjoh 2017).

Jo gave fifty Rands to Simon while exchanging in Afrikaans. Simon answered and left his interlocutor's outstretched hand still holding the bill. Ultimately, he took the money and acted as if he was thanking God. The two herbalists burst out laughing. Then, Simon picked up the conversation in English as he saw me trying to figure out the reasons for their amusement.

'Remi Boy!' he exclaimed high fiving me. 'Can you imagine praying Jah for money or items?' As he finished his question, he threw the fifty Rands bill on the pavement and mimed a dance around it. Jo, the only other herbalists present that day, laughed even more.

'Can you only imagine invoking the Lord and thanking Him for money?' Still dancing in circles around the bill, he faked a prayer. 'I thank Haile Selassie I, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, for these fifty Rands. I turn to the Lord, asking for more…'

Then, he continued with a more serious tone.

'No, no, no, Remi Boy, that's nonsense. That's not right. Us Rasta, we are humble. We accept what we have and stay true to God and ourselves.'

Simon and Jo refused to invoke Jah for money, goods, or material possessions. Nevertheless, observing Simon wearing Nikes on his feet and a basketball jersey seemed to challenge his discourse. A deeper understanding, however, permits to unpack another identity knot and nuances the paradox raised. Indeed, Simon, despite the clothes he wore early in the research and his taste for material goods (sunglasses, jewelry, phone, etc.) challenged Babylon on his own terms. He represented Rastafari through the turban covering his dread, the music he played at the corner, and his words, practices, and beliefs. Therefore, I perceived the healer in identity shadowlands (Calleja et al. 2018), at a crossroads between his urban background, the overarching context, Rastafari, and the Indigenous

[92] See pp. 13.

identity that he claimed. Not confused by the multiple senses of belonging, Simon dynamically and fluidly negotiated his identity within a symbolic space from which opportunities could arise, life trajectories composed and re-composed, and identity was shaped, gained, lost, acquired, and discarded. Simon's inner-change that led him to wear the Sack again stemmed from this. He reconsidered his worldview, rejected material temptations, and conformed to a more spiritual framework of thought. From a more theoretical standpoint, the shift experienced contributes to a better understanding of the incomplete nature of both identity and anthropology. Indeed, observations and interpretations are partial, subject to change, and constantly challenged. Identity and anthropology, therefore, emerge as two domains in a constant situation of motion, never complete.

When exerting their healing strategies within the space of the street corner, Simon, Jo, Gad, and Naphtali promoted Rastafari, mobilized Indigenous knowledge and heritages, and dynamically and fluidly negotiated their identity. In the process of producing their overarching identity, they re-appropriated the diverse influences that had affected their lives and composed/re-composed with multiple senses of belonging and sources of knowledge. The healers challenged rigid conceptions of identity formation through the dynamic, fluid, and continual negotiation process. Considering identity and knowledge production through that angle of analysis can help to liberate alternative understandings and contribute to challenging the troubling rise of nationalism, populism, and promotion of exclusive identities. In that regard, Nyamnjoh's celebration (2017) of incompleteness, mobility, and dynamism within processes of identity production emerges as a conceptual stepping-stone.

Through the shared experience, various moments underlined the intertwined Rasta and KhoeSan sources of knowledge that participated in the shaping of the Bush doctors' overarching identity. Therefore, when Jo explained how to bless the moment with burning medicine[93], he mobilized KhoeSan ancestors, as well as Rastafari lineages/Jah. The various heritages enmeshed through the Bush doctor's perspectives and occupation. The herbalist stated after lighting the medicine:

> *'Now, you just wait. You listen to the ancestors, wait for them to guide you. You don't wanna rush. You respect the moment, stay patient, and humble. You thank Jah; everything will come if you have patience[94].'*

Jo, insisting on the process of transmission, reasserted the nature multiple of his knowledge

[93] See pp. 48 – 49.
[94] Ibid.

framework and the profound connections between Rastafari and KhoeSan senses of belonging within his overarching identity.

> *'Working herbs permits us to reconnect with our Indigenous identity.' he mentioned. 'Look, the elders taught us. Now, it's our turn to teach. You see, my Granny,' he stated while showing me a picture, 'that woman knew the medicine. Her mother and my mother knew it too. It is a KhoeSan thing to work herbs at the corner. You won't see too many herbalists who are not KhoeSan. Me, I started in 2008. First year I was a Rasta, I didn't work with medicine. A lot of Rasta don't know about medicine*[95]*.'*

Jo fluidly jumped from one sense of belonging to another, dynamically shaping the complex and intertwined framework of thought and identity that he and the other Bush doctors claimed. Furthermore, the continuity of the quote unveiled another potential source that nourished their knowledge and framed the application of their healing strategies. Indeed, the group of Bush doctors sometimes mobilized the Xhosa framework of thought.

> *'For Xhosa people, the Sangoma, they are also traditional healers. You know what a Sangoma is, right?' he asked. I nodded positively. The herbalist carried on. 'The Sangoma they are like us, but different.'*

Therefore, although perceived as different, Sangoma appeared to share similarities with the Bush doctors. Both are healers. That echoes Mellet's consideration of 'Khoena peoples who were either part of the Xhosa or in confederal relationships with the Xhosa' (Mellet no date). Contacts, relationships, and kinships were established and maintained between various communities, hence the enmeshment of heritages, lineages, and sources of knowledge. The healing vocation unfolded multiple frameworks of thought and ways to conceive medicine that mingled and nurtured each other. Through the fieldwork, healing strategies were not limited to a specific and unique worldview.

> *After confirming Jo's knowledge around the Tuma fruit*[96]*, the elder left. Then, the Bush doctor explained the origin of the small round shaped medicine.*
> *'That Tuma fruit comes from Xhosa people. As the elder said, it cleans you from the inside. You release everything, can't control, swoosh.' he added with a snap of fingers. 'So, it's not only KhoeSan medicine that you have?' I asked, awkwardly trying to understand*

[95] See pp. 70.
[96] See pp. 55.

the source of his knowledge.

'Mostly, my Lord, but medicine comes from everywhere, it's not only from one people. Xhosa people, they use the Tuma fruit, and we use it too. We are open, and we are constantly learning. That's why you need to connect, Remi! You never know.' he answered, opening my perspective on the origin of their wisdom and, more broadly, on the process of knowledge production.

Therefore, outside influences participated in the shaping of the Bush doctors' medicinal wisdom and in the building of their entire identity. Those external inputs blur eventual boundaries between outside and inside forms of knowledge. Through the moments spent with the group, I observed fluid re-appropriations and assimilations of frameworks of thought that were not limited to exclusive origins and sources. The healing strategies drew from Xhosa heritages in addition to the KhoeSan and Rasta sources mobilized. Projecting within an ampler scope of relationships, I imagine possibilities for even broader influences[97]. Adaptability, open-mindedness, and mobility prevailed in the process of knowledge production, which dynamically developed through exchanges, contacts, and borrowings. This reminds Mbembe's idea of African modernity, as "a migrant form of modernity, born out of overlapping genealogies, at the intersections of multiple encounters with multiple elsewhere" (2016). The framework of knowledge presented, in line with its contemporary context, was shaped through 'overlapping genealogies' resulting from 'multiple encounters with multiple elsewhere.'

Remi, leaning back on the wall between Jo and Gad, reflected on the Tuma fruit conversation. Gad was busy sewing a red, gold, and green Sack. Jo was engrossed in the constant flow of cars and people, eventually greeting some passers-by. His words resonated in Remi's mind. 'That's why you need to connect, Remi!' Remi needed to connect. Always. The exchange with the healer led the student to revise his interpretation of knowledge formation. Indeed, dynamism, fluidity, and a multiplicity of origins shaped the wisdom displayed and the identity claimed. 'Medicine comes from everywhere.' Therefore, enclosing the process of knowledge formation to a unique heritage would lock people in a static imaginary and limit the possibilities of interpretation. To challenge previous research and arbitrary categorisations, Remi realized that he needed to open the focal and understand the broad aspect of knowledge production. Seeking for a unique source was irrelevant and did not transcribe the richness of the enterprise. The interpretation of an everlasting and constant learning process, regularly promoted by his fellows, further reinforced Remi's emphasis on dynamism, fluidity, and incompleteness. 'We are open, and we are constantly learning,'

[97] Nevertheless, my scope of analysis being limited, I cannot assert this supposition.

Gad stated. Therefore, the quest for wisdom was perpetual. In the same way, Remi's quest to connect was infinite. He will continuously need to connect.

'There are too many medicines, my Lord, too many different plants, and too many ways of mixing them. We are always learning, continuously...' explained Gad when I asked how many medicines he used.

'Sometimes we learn from elders, sometimes we teach each other, and sometimes we just learn by ourselves. You see, if Jo makes a mix, maybe I'll ask him questions or maybe I'll tell him this and that. We teach each other, help each other out. I can show him a plant that he doesn't know, a medicine that he doesn't use. This is important because you can't pretend to know everything. You must be humble in your work and in what you know. Nobody knows everything. There is too much to know.'

Gad paused for a bit, looked at the constant flow of people passing through the street corner, then continued. 'And we learn by ourselves. Sometimes you taste, you smell, you touch a medicine when you go up there in the Mountain. Sometimes you try what someone else did, and you see if it works, if it's good, if you want to use it again. First, you try for yourself, then, you can start making it for others, if it works, if it's good medicine. Learning, always learning…' the Bush doctor concluded pensively.

Learning is an unfinished and everlasting process. Gad and his fellow Bush doctors regularly promoted that conception, which reasserted their humility and acuity. They embraced the incompleteness and dynamism of their medicinal wisdom and always seemed open and attentive to alternative healing strategies. Eager to learn, they questioned, interacted, and conversed with persons presenting peculiar knowledge at the street corner. They also learned by themselves. However, I did not directly witness a concrete teaching phase. Self-learning and teaching processes were brief and sudden moments rather than established and well-defined exchanges. Therefore, a new medicine could inconspicuously burgeon on one's stall, after extended observations, exchanges, personal questioning, and tries. It had to be re-appropriated and fully understood before emerging on the table. Throughout my experience with the healers, I dynamically revised the apprehension of my own knowledge formation. In that regard, we can learn from the humble dispositions of the group, potentially re-consider global worldviews, and challenge the master's logic of power and control. The 'continueal process of reasoning' (Zips 2006: xi) correlates with the Rastafari perpetual quest for righteousness and wisdom. An African proverb states that 'a wise man never knows all, only fools know everything.' More globally, that dynamic consideration of knowledge is a common feature of

Indigenous identity. Therefore, Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali, did not only connect with people within a direct reach but also established bridges with broader Indigenous communities.

> *'Now, let me tell you, my Lord, it's like the Indian people*[98] *in America. Respect, my brother... I respect them because they are like us, stripped of their land, of their rights, but still fighting to this day. You see, they are the Indigenous people of their own continent. Us, we are the Indigenous people here. It's the same. We are fighting the government, representing Indigenous knowledge, working the medicine of the ancestors, the ancients' wisdom. We are fighting guns with our bows and arrows. We are the First people just like they are the First people over there in America. We are all connected.'*

I propose this quote from Jo to open up the development. The herbalist conceived similarities and connections between Indigenous people across the world. Medina (2014) emphasizes common Indigenous worldviews in her analysis of Nepantla spirituality. The author believes that understanding and embracing Indigenous spiritualities and promoting Indigenous knowledge contribute to processes of healing, self-appreciation, cultural acceptance, and decolonization. These processes concern communities that face similar challenges, suffer a lack of legitimacy, and experience negative reassessments from the overarching dominant system. For the group of healers, belonging to the Indigenous community at large emerged as a source of pride. The consideration of a unified Indigenous belonging shaped a global sense of identity and implemented hope and faith in overcoming the various struggles they had experienced.

Additionally, Jo's words suggested a process of re-appropriation and challenged prejudices/preconceptions. The healer linked Indigenous communities with the use of bows and arrows, re-composing and re-adapting static conceptions of traditions and culture. Far from perpetuating clichés and frozen imaginaries of Indigenous communities that still hunt or fight with those weapons, Jo mobilized an underlying symbolism. Indeed, he painted a David fighting Goliath image, with underpowered Indigenous communities limited in resources that challenged the all-powerful dominant system. He contributed to reasserting respect and esteem toward marginalized people. In Jo's conception, these communities, across continents, cultures, and languages, challenged the mainstream framework of knowledge that had undermined their own process of knowledge production. Indigenous people worked with ancient medicine, fought with limited resources, and promoted worldviews that participated in the legitimization of their identities, lineages, and heritages.

[98] Native Americans or Indigenous Americans are more appropriate terminologies. Nevertheless, I propose a direct transcription of the conversation.

Therefore, Indigenous communities dynamically re-appropriated values, knowledge, and senses of belonging, as First people, in line with their time, local, and global environment. Jo promoted unity. As the famous Sioux chief Sitting-Bull says, 'as individual fingers we can easily be broken, but all together we make a mighty fist.'

Seeking to further the understanding of connections, relations, and unity between Indigenous communities, I propose potential readings:

- *Feathers of Hope: A First Nations Youth Action Plan,* a report published by the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth *(2014)*
- *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights,* wrote Will Kymlicka (1996)
- *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples,* by the United Nations (2008)
- *Our History Is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long Tradition of Indigenous Resistance* wrote by Nick Estes (2019).

I conceive these readings as potential foundations for future projects and theoretical frameworks for alternative comprehensions and interpretations.

At the core of the part are the interdependent and profound connections between processes of knowledge production and identity negotiation. Throughout the fieldwork, the identity claimed and the bodies of knowledge mobilized intermeshed and complemented each other. Dynamism, fluidity, and incompleteness built the conceptual framework of these processes. Through their occupation and everyday life, the group of Bush doctors who contributed to the work embraced everlasting learning processes, reinforcing their dynamic and incomplete dispositions, and stressing humble and wise worldviews. The perpetual learning that correlated with the Rastafari continual quest for wisdom and righteousness influenced my own interpretation of knowledge formation. Furthermore, Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali negotiated with multiple senses of belonging in the shaping of their identity. They appeared in a shadowlands situation[99] (Calleja et al. 2018). Knowledge and identity production, although characterized by unfinishedness, resulted in a unique and legitimate framework, continually shaped through the re-appropriation of various influences. The healers drew from multiple sources

[99] To push the reflection further, I believe that every process of identity negotiation is fluid, dynamic, and embedded in shadowlands situations. The degree of negotiation, re-appropriation, and re-composition with multiple sources of belonging may vary between the different identities claimed.

such as KhoeSan, Rasta, and Xhosa. Finally, the group also underlined broader Indigenous connections, promoting similarities and common characteristics across continents, people, and cultures.

To conclude the chapter, healing emerged as a fundamental feature of the Indigenous identity claimed by the group of Bush doctors. My interlocutors conceived medicine in its totality, with the healing strategies permeating several fields and mobilizing the body and mind. Every sense participated in the absorption, transmission, and application of the knowledge displayed. Different motivations drove patients to seek the healers' help. In that regard, the herbalists adapted and proposed a vast scope in the application of their abilities. Fully involved in their practice, they also healed themselves in the process, on physical, mental, social, as well as cultural levels.

Multiple sources of knowledge nurtured the healers' framework of thought, reuniting different senses of belonging and contributing to shaping a complex and intertwined identity. Incompleteness, dynamism, and fluidity characterized their processes of knowledge production and identity negotiation. They continuously learned, though teachings, experiences, and self-understandings. My interlocutors re-appropriated various influences, drawing within KhoeSan, Rasta, and Xhosa heritages. Finally, they established bridges with broader Indigenous communities, unveiling similarities across continents, people, and cultures. The Bush doctors presented a unique and legitimate identity, in line with the context of the time, dynamic, mobile, and fluid.

Conclusion

I propose to conclude the work with an ultimate episode that recaps and highlights the identity negotiation unpacked. Therefore, Jo explained, completing some of Gad, Simon, and Naphtali's arguments (hence the possible overlapping with previous vignettes):

> *'You see, Remi, such as Gad, I studied nature. The trees, the plants, the weather, the animals... I can know what the season is or how the weather should turn out by looking at the trees, by contemplating the night sky… The night sky tells you, my brother. He tells you that the summer is slowly coming. I studied what is around us and I continue to do so. There is a lot to learn just by connecting with nature.'*
>
> *'So, with who did you study? Who taught you?' I naively asked.*
>
> *'No, no, no. Must I tell you now? Look here, you can ask Gad,' he said while pointing at his colleague. 'It's inside us, in our bloodline. It's not about who teaches who. It's in our blood.*

It's about connecting with the environment, with the other. You see, Remi, I can look at this tree and feel the energy within, feel his power.' he said as he showed the tree across the road.
'Same for this stone, we are connected, through God's power, through I and I.'
'But how can you connect in this environment? We are surrounded by roads, buildings, and concrete?' I continued the conversation.
'Nature is everywhere, my Lord. The Mountain is just here, around the corner,' he explained in reference to Devil's Peak right behind him. 'This tree is maybe 500 years old, and that's nature. He lives longer than us. That's one of God's things. That's a thing with Jah in it, a powerful thing. Us too we have Jah's power. We are our own God, my brother, the people from the Earth. Even if we are living in the city, nature is all around. You must open your eyes to see it.'
'Look, Remi, sometimes, I close my eyes and dream. In my dream, I see the Mountain, and I know. I know there are connections. I know it's in me, in us, in our blood, the Indigenous blood, KhoeSan blood. You see, our people, the KhoeSan, it's us, Remi. Since very young, we don't want to wear shoes. Our parents wanted us to wear shoes, but we didn't want to. You know why, Remi? Because already we were attracted and connected with nature. We didn't want to stay home, in the street. Very young, we would leave our home and go to the beach by ourselves, just to see the sea, just to be in nature! It's in us!'

A woman came to the corner, asking for medicine. Jo suspended our conversation and helped the client. When she left, he came back to the subject.
'You can also feel the power within people, when they need medicine, or when they are taking medicine and it's working. Did you feel something with her?' I nodded negatively. 'Mmmhh, now I understand. It must be an herbalist thing. Maybe you can develop it. You must try next time. You connect with someone and feel the energy. You must always try to connect, my brother Remi.'

> *Now, **I** felt comfortable interacting at the street corner, exchanging, sharing, and occupying the space as an integrative part of the group. **I** was not becoming a Rasta or feeling a KhoeSan sense of belonging emerging, and **I** neither absorbed enough knowledge to become an herbalist. However, **I** dynamically re-composed my identity, re-shaped my framework of thought, and drew in new alternative sources and heritages. **I** negotiated my identity through contacts, relations, and exchanges woven at the street corner. That negotiation process was inherently dynamic and incomplete, a constant work in progress. Ultimately, **I** must carry on what **I** learnt through the moments shared with the group and continue trying to connect. Always connect.*

To conclude, the research proposes to underline the complex identity negotiation of a group of Bush doctors juggling with multiple senses of belonging. Dynamism, fluidity, and incompleteness shaped the conceptual framework of the negotiating project. Central to their worldviews was the promotion of a relational ontology, permitting to open the understanding of the web of life and its structuring connections. From this alternative framework of thought unfolded in front of our eyes, right at the corner of the street, we must learn. Directly informing the concept of relational ontology, the herbalists continuously underlined the need to connect, contributing to decentralize the human from the center stage and promoting humility and harmony in relationships. Therefore, through the experience granted by the group of healers that profoundly influenced my personal development, I understood my continual need to connect with all the elements of the environment. Not only me but We, as people, need to connect. 'We must connect…'

Limitations and Takeaways

Doing research is, by nature, an incomplete endeavour. Thus, limitations emerged. Furthermore, the process required a level of involvement not yet experienced in my academic career. Therefore, I have drawn important lessons and teachings to carry on in eventual future projects as well as in everyday life.

Although the work already mobilizes various disciplines (anthropology, history, religious studies...), a more integrative enterprise would deepen the research. Reaching fields outside humanities such as botanic, natural sciences, etc., and establishing relationships with other researchers would strengthen the analysis. For example, the Cape Bush Doctors' website[100] proposes potential contacts who would help co-producing a more integrative work and deepen the understandings. Nevertheless, doing research is subjective, a matter of choices, and the Master's degree is limited in time. Therefore, I chose to focus the work on a more social/humanist aspect. At a Ph.D. level, I will reflect upon a potential integrative study.

Although I got deeply involved in the work and shared extensive moments with the contributors, I cannot pretend to propose a complete understanding of their identity negotiation. I believe that exhaustiveness in the process of identity negotiation and, in general, in social science is not a reachable endeavour. However, a deeper apprehension of the process of negotiation could be realised with more time, thorough relations, and a fluent level in Afrikaans. Doing research is a constant work in progress, never complete, and relatively fluid.

Stemming from this, numerous concepts and ideas broached in class appeared very relevant

[100] http://www.cbd.org.za/

throughout the fieldwork. Therefore, I was able to experience/apply different theories analysed during my academic formation. First, I deeply understood and reflected on the partial and incomplete nature of leading an ethnography. Furthermore, I mobilized dynamism and openness throughout the various steps of the work. I rethought several preconceptions and pre-established notions. Besides challenging a static conception of doing research, that process of perpetual reflection permitted me to open my angles of analysis and led me to a better understanding of my position.

In that regard, self-reflexivity structured the work. Working on the process of identity negotiation led me to rethink my own identity and understand it in relation to the belonging of my interlocutors. Indeed, anthropology is the study of the self as much as the study of others. The research permitted me to shape and understand my own identity before trying to understand and contribute to the promotion of the Bush doctors' identity. Not bounded by the academic world, the work eventually permeated my entire life. I learnt from my interlocutors, opened and broadened my worldview, and evolved as a researcher and as a person. I wove bonds, sought to understand the web of life, and tried to connect. My integration, extended contacts/exchanges, and understanding of a specific framework of thought have contributed to the shaping of a network of relationships and furthered my involvement in a body of knowledge pivotal in my development.

Thinking upon the relations woven was central in my reflections. Were Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali simple contributors or real friends? In that regard, the violent nature of anthropology surfaced. I entered a peculiar space in which friendships and working relationships mingled. I felt embedded in shadowlands of emotions, constantly analysing and taking notes of my interlocutors. Although today I consider the young Bush doctors of the Kora street corner as friends, I wonder if the ambiguous fieldwork relations will continue. Will I carry on the analysing process while spending time with them? Doing anthropology is a complex project.

Building on the idea of shadowlands of emotions, the research raised happiness, pride, joy, as well as frustration, discomfort, and potential pain. These emotional swings surface through the self-reflexive vignettes, in which Remi's feelings whirl between alienation and acceptance, connections and disconnections. The anthropological enterprise influences those who contributed to the research as well as the researcher. Both the contacted communities and the academician face potential harm. Therefore, I deeply reconsidered the importance of ethics.

I also profoundly reflected upon the writing process. The questions of whom I was writing for led me to wonder for who I was doing the research. As I am writing these lines, I do not have a concrete response yet. Although my initial intention was to study and write for those who contributed to the project, I understood that I was primarily benefiting from the experience. I believe I have, now, a

better understanding of the subjective aspect of the enterprise. Indeed, writing is a process of selection. During the work, I left out some of the information shared and promoted others. Therefore, I propose the identity negotiation of the Bush doctors through personal choices. I cannot pretend to transcribe their voices objectively but only to share a glimpse of what I consider and interpret as pivotal in the formation of their identity claim.

Finally, I noted a shared and inclusive Indigenous framework of knowledge that permeated communities and continents. I see these connections eventually laying the foundations for future work, expanding my focal, and broadening my angles of analysis. I imagine great potentialities working with Indigenous communities around the process of identity negotiation, spiritualities, and healing strategies.

To conclude, the moments that the group of Bush doctors accepted to share have contributed to my personal enrichment. I have learnt and evolved as a researcher and as a man. Through the experience, I was able to develop an understanding of who I was and to dynamically negotiate my identity before pretending to understand Jo, Simon, Gad, and Naphtali's process of identity negotiation. In the future, I intend to carry on the teachings and lessons shared by the healers. I believe that the framework of knowledge and alternative worldviews displayed can impact our global world. Being able to weave relations with the group, which are still ongoing, I hope to meet the bearers of the traditions, people my interlocutors referred to as '*the elders, our forefathers*,' taught people who have '*the knowledge of plants.*' Finally, I plan to honour Jo's invitation to visit the Marcus Garvey community, where he lives. '*Remi, my brother, you must come to Marcus Garvey. There it's nice. You will meet a lot of Rastas, listen to what they say, their knowledge, have a good time, connect. Yes, my brother, you must come.*'

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